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The Week

WHAT can President Hoover say in answer to the noted economists who declare that the appropriations for public works which he has sanctioned are far too small to meet the emergency and that a billion-dollar loan should be made for this purpose? Among the signatories are such outstanding men as Professors E. R. A. Seligman of Columbia, T. S. Adams of Yale, Paul H. Douglas of Chicago, Ernest Minor Patterson of Columbia, and even Leo Wolman, who wrote for the National Bureau of Economic Research the report of public works called for by President Hoover's own Committee on Recent Economic Changes. In the face of this authority he cannot very well say that the action is not necessary. His only possible reply, it appears to us, is that the purchase of land, the plans, the engineering surveys and the contracts by which so large an amount might be spent are not ready, and that by the time they were got ready the emergency might be over. But such an answer would be a confession of unpreparedness. We only wish the economists had demanded also the creation of a national planning board which could always have such preparations in hand far in advance, so that action could be taken promptly whenever the need arose. Indeed, it is possible that the existing depression will last long enough so that even if planning were begun now, its results would be seen in time to help.

THE new year has seen the usual crop of predictions about the future of industry and employment. We have examined a good many of them carefully to see whether there is any solid ground for hope. Our test is the amount of optimism shown. If the predictions had been unanimous in saying that a revival was now beginning and that we were in for a full glow of prosperity by the summer of 1931, we should have been certain that the depression would become still deeper and that no relief was in sight. If, on the other hand, the prophets had all said that there was no sign of improvement, and that the future was entirely black, we should have expected a boom in stocks and production almost immediately. The soothsayers, however, are treading cautiously. Few of them expect a marked up-turn soon; the best they can see is a moderate revival in 1931, with perhaps a return to normal in 1932. This moderation leads us to expect the revival at about the same time as do the prophets. Neither their optimism nor their pessimism is so marked as to mean that the rule of contraries applies.

SO FAR it seems that no one has accused the farmers of Lonoke County, Arkansas, who marched into the town of England with guns on their hips and demanded food, of being inspired by emissaries from Moscow. Arkansas is probably the state least touched by collectivistic theories, the state where individualism and the pioneering spirit have survived in their purest form. But hunger produces strange effects. When the supply of Red Cross application blanks ran out, and when the county chairman of the Red Cross, appalled by the lack of printed forms and terrified by the possibility that "impostors" might benefit by the dole he was charged to administer, suspended the distribution of food entirely, the farmers took action. Landowners and tenants, white and Negro—though the Negroes were outnumbered ten to one—they as-

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sembled in the streets of England. "Our children are crying for food," they shouted, "and we are going to get it."—"We are not beggars. We are willing to work for fifty cents a day, but we're not going to starve and we're not going to let our families starve." The Red Cross responded heroically—not with food, for there was plenty to eat on the merchants' idle shelves, but with what has become essential to obtaining food—that is, a fresh supply of printed matter.

THERE has been a tendency to minimize the whole affair. The five hundred marching farmers reported in the Sunday papers were reduced to three hundred by Monday morning, to one hundred by Monday afternoon. An official of the Red Cross asserted that the trouble was caused by only forty malcontents. Soon we shall be told that everybody in Lonoke County is well fed, that nobody demanded food, that if anybody did, he was merely an impostor. Nevertheless, the march of the farmers into England is significant of the economic chaos in which we are living. Here is a county of rich farms, reduced to starvation by the drought and by the low prices of all farm products. Here are merchants willing to help, but nearly bankrupt themselves and unable to sell the provisions with which their shelves are overstocked. Here is a vast country producing too much to eat, too much to wear, too many luxuries with too few workmen. Here is a private charity organization charged with performing a task that is properly the government's and performing it badly, not because it lacks money, staff or system, but because it has too much system, and because its local supply of printed blanks ran out. Here, finally, are the farmers of Arkansas—yes, and of other states—ignorant of social theories, ignorant of the debates at Washington, but determined that if their children starve they'll damned well know the reason why.

MUCH the most interesting aspect of the revolution in Panama is the relation of the American government to it. That conditions there were ripe for revolt has long been known; the sorry record of the Arosemena administration was set forth in detail in The New Republic for November 26 ("Unrest in Panama," page 33). Heretofore it has been assumed that the United States would not permit a revolution to take place; and indeed, Secretary Kellogg formally warned the Panamanians in 1928 that any attempted revolution following the farcical election of that year would result in forcible intervention by the United States. It is absurd to suppose that the plans of the Arias-Alfaro group were unknown to the American government; and the large force of United States soldiers who are kept in the Canal Zone could have thwarted the uprising without the least difficulty. It looks as though our government decided that the revolution was desirable and therefore permitted it to take place. If this is true, it represents a welcome change in the direction of common sense. Too often, our opposition to forcible alteration of government in Central America and the Caribbean countries has been used to bolster up a tyrannical dictatorship. It will be particularly interesting to see whether the new policy, if it exists, brings about an improvement in the Cuban situation, which is similar to and worse than that which existed for so many years in Panama.

THE killing of eight American Marines in Nicaragua, presumably by soldiers allied with Sandino, has brought, as might have been expected, a renewal of demands that all our armed forces should be withdrawn from that country, a demand with which The New Republic is in hearty sympathy. At the same time it should be pointed out that the skirmish in which not only these men were killed but, according to the official American reports, an even larger number of Nicaraguans, might have been foreseen and should surprise no one. The danger of such an episode has long existed; it is likely at any time to be repeated. It is our policy as a whole which should be criticised, and not its almost inevitable result. At a time when the American government is acting with unusual intelligence in regard to Haiti and Panama, we seem to be going backward in our policy toward Nicaragua. We are neither preparing the people there to stand alone, nor frankly admitting that we mean to take the only real alternative, which is to make Nicaragua a colony. The New Republic does not believe that the American people would tolerate the second of these plans; and if they will not, it is more than time that the first should be put under way.

PRAISE from the Duce is praise indeed. However we do not believe that the role of flatterer and sycophant half so well becomes him as that of fire-eater and sword-swallower. For the praises of this country which he wafted over the air on New Year's Day to the ladies and gentlemen of our great American radio audience sounded, it seems to us, a little too stilted, a little too stiff to have come straight from the heart. In the mouth of one from whom we have come to expect fire, the speech seemed almost as if our own Mr. Coolidge had ghosted it for him. However, we do not sincerely believe this. Neither do we believe that speaking in English cramped the great Benito's style. We have other suspicions. For we have a feeling that the spectacle of Italy's sinking finances and his own precarious position have led Mussolini to the conclusion that currying favor with foreign nations will be a much safer course for him to pursue in the immediate future than rattling the sword or shaking his fist in their terrified faces. Moreover, it is also evident that a little bird has told him that his future requests for loans may be less kindly received because of his past wisecracks about us, wisecracks which Americans allow only Red

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Lewis and George Bernard Shaw to make with impunity.

TO THE foreign observer, the strike of the Wales miners seems to revolve about minor adjustments of hours and pay which are too technical for the layman to understand, and it appears as if skilled mediation might bring the stoppage to an end. This view, however, overlooks the fundamental situation of the British coal industry, which is so precarious that there is very little margin for compromise. The standard of living of the miners is already so low that any concession can be made only with the greatest difficulty, while the owners have been unable to hold their market at existing prices. Commission after commission has examined the industry, only to report that its salvation depends on thoroughgoing reorganization, which probably cannot be achieved except under nationalization. Yet nationalization has never been adopted by any government, because none but a Labor government would exercise compulsion to expropriate the owners, and the Labor government has not the majority with which it could do so. Even if it could, an intelligent scheme of nationalization would require closing the marginal mines and thus add to the volume of unemployment. The British coal industry presents a picture of the bitter end of unplanned capitalist exploitation of natural resources, which has gone so far without unified control that it may be too late even for socialism to save it.

THE English are a blunt race and a frank one. When they want a thing they go ahead and get it with much less pussy-footing than, for example, the athletic directors of our higher institutions of learning. In proof of this statement we take pleasure in citing an advertisement which recently appeared in The London Times, a want ad addressed to "boys who are good at games" and stating that the headmaster of a prep school "will accept one or two boys who show promise at athletics at reduced fees of £75." It seems to us that such frankness about school athletics is highly commendable, and we commend it to our own college authorities. Let them profit by its example. Let them come out into the open and henceforth advertise for their players instead of snooping about for them. In fact, we will even help them along by suggesting two specimen advertisements, something like these: "Wanted: A couple of husky boiler-makers to play tackle. No previous training necessary and no questions asked. Board and lodging. Tuition thrown in free." Or this: "Men! Want a nice sheepskin diploma? All you'll have to do is hit the line for good old Ipecac. Food and lodging all found and nothing softer than our cinch courses. Apply in person to the Dean. Act quickly! It may mean a B. S. (college degree) for you!"

RECENT reports carry apparently well authenticated accounts of a new automobile carburetor which is so much more efficient than those now in use that it renders the percentage of poisonous carbon monoxide in the exhaust almost negligible, increases the mileage per gallon about 40 percent, and diminishes the carbon deposits in the cylinder and the dilution of the cylinder oil. All this is, if true, immensely important news for automobile users, pedestrians and traffic policemen. What strikes us about the matter is that there is no public agency representing consumers which will tell them authoritatively whether or not it is true, or any other relevant information which they should know. If its use becomes general, this will happen, in all probability, only because millions of dollars have been spent in advertising a product which, if it is what it is said to be, ought to be able to sell itself, and news of which ought to spread easily without acres of colored ink and pictures of pretty girls. And use of such a thing could become general, with the aid of advertising, even if it were not what its producers claim. Here is another case which shows the need for much more general application of the technique of buying now used by the United States government through the Bureau of Standards, and accessible to the individual consumer only through such a relatively small and limited organization as Consumers' Research, Inc.

THOUGH many people are not aware of it, government ownership and operation of railways is already a fact in the United States. Uncle Sam built, and is operating, a line in Alaska which is important enough to have a gross annual revenue of a million dollars a year. Some months ago a committee of the United States Senate went to Alaska and looked into the condition of the railway, to see whether economies could be effected. It is not clear whether or not the committee made any suggestions for reduction of service, but since their visit, such reduction has certainly taken place, the normal winter schedule having been cut by 50 percent, and some stations closed entirely, at grave inconvenience to many Alaskans. The senatorial committee will make its report this winter, and it should make interesting reading even for those who, as is unfortunately the case with most Americans, do not at all realize the importance of Alaska in our national scheme of things. President Hoover, and his administration in general, are implacable opponents of government ownership and operation—except the long list of things which are already in that category and about which the President never thinks at all. It would be a misfortune if, in its hostility to government operation, the administration were to cripple the Alaskan railway so that it could not serve the community as it should.

AFTER all, the World War was not fought in vain. A reputable institute of pharmacology in Germany has been making exhaustive scientific tests of all sorts of alleged hair restorers, and has dis-

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covered that the best of the lot is dichlorethyl-sulphide, more commonly known as "mustard gas," which came to be widely and unfavorably known because of its use during the latter stages of the great conflict. It should be used, however, only in extremely dilute solution, and under a physician's care. Moreover, its only value—and this is true of every other medicament supposed to alter the status of a bald pate—is that it irritates the scalp and thus promotes the circulation. This can be done just as well, or better, by simple massage. The barbers, the "scalp treatment institutes," the multitudinous advertisers of hair tonics and guaranteed restorers, when they tell you that their mysterious lotions will grow hair, are talking exactly one-hundred-percent nonsense. Anyone can get the same results, such as they are, with a brush. But will the publication of this fact daunt the advertisers and their high-pressure salesmen? Not if we know our American business man.

Railroad Consolidation—Hoover Style

THE LEADING financial news of last week was President Hoover's announcement of the plan, which he also endorsed, to consolidate into four systems some fifty railroads serving the territory east of Chicago. This may or may not be a good plan; neither The New Republic nor anyone else is at present in a position to discuss effectively its merits and demerits, for the details have not been given us. They will of course be scrutinized with great care by the Interstate Commerce Commission, the body charged, under the law, with the duty of deciding whether any proposed consolidation is in the public interest. In the meantime, we may consider the general principles which are involved, and particularly the propriety of Mr. Hoover's injecting himself into the proceedings at the time and in the fashion that he did.

The financial and economic ramifications of the proposed consolidations are of course tremendous; but their significance does not lie merely in the importance of the railroads which are at present involved. It has been stated, and not denied, that the President intends to press for consolidation in all parts of the country as soon as this first and most important rearrangement is completed. The whole United States is therefore concerned, and not only indirectly but directly.

These consolidations, of course, are subject to certain federal statutes, the first of which is the Sherman Act, directed against monopolies in every industry. In 1920, thirty years after the passage of that law, Congress adopted legislation permitting the consolidation of railroads, if approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The Commission is authorized to grant its approval only if it finds that the unification of the roads involved is in the public interest. The responsibility of deciding whether or not specific consolidations are good for the public presents one of the most complex tasks assigned to any government agency. Directly or indirectly, the Commission must consider the effect on the public, on the employees and on the investors.

Illustrations of the effect on the general public may be drawn from the announcement made last week by President Hoover. He said that among the purposes of railroad consolidation are the broadening of competition and the eventual lowering of rates. But mergers may also narrow competition. The facts necessary to make a forecast as to whether competition will be increased or diminished are legion, and reaching a judgment calls for high technical skill—skill which the President of course does not possess and would not claim for himself.

As for the bearing of consolidation on rates—a phase of the subject of particular importance since railroad rates are a charge on every person's food, clothing and shelter—only thorough inquiry will show whether increased or decreased rates and fares are likely to be charged. The Interstate Commerce Commission is really dealing with one of the factors of the cost of living, when it decides whether or not a union of particular roads is in the public interest. Employment problems also loom large in consolidation proposals. President Hoover said last week that he had initiated the negotiations among the Eastern rail chiefs in order to contribute to the recovery of business by enlarging opportunity for employment. The next day Senator Couzens stated, after talking with one of those chiefs, the head of the Baltimore and Ohio, that the proposed mergers would reduce the number of jobs on the Eastern lines. The Senator also said that, judging from the opinions of various rail executives, it would be a long time before the consolidations would create any volume of additional construction work.

The Interstate Commerce Commission will not only have to ascertain, when it is asked to pass upon these unification applications, whether they will lead to more or less employment on the railroads and in other industries, but it will have to gauge the extent of any such change in employment volume, the periods of time, proximate and remote, when such results will be felt, and the bearing of all such facts on prosperity. It will have the question whether lessened employment, when accompanied by reduction in operating expense, is in the public interest. The Commission will be asked to consider whether consolidations resulting in decreased employment should not be held in check until new jobs have been made available for the displaced workers at other points in American industry. In short, on the employment aspects alone, the Commission will have a veritable Pandora's box, not to be unlocked until it has armed itself with all obtainable relevant facts.

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When it turns from the railroad workers to the railroad investors, it will be confronted by a task which dwarfs into insignificance all other similar financial problems heretofore considered by it. The bankers guiding these consolidations will propose an exchange of securities by many classes of investors in the roads. The separate stock and bond issues of these companies run to several hundred and the capital represented is more than eight billion dollars. Commensurately great will be the Commission's labors in ascertaining whether the consolidation schemes do full justice to all classes of security holders.

All these questions will arise for consideration before the Interstate Commerce Commission. On many of them its decisions will be binding, to use Senator Couzens' phrase, "in perpetuity." The Commission's judgments will involve guesses of large proportions. It will want to go to the farthest limit of available fact before it takes a leap into the dark of forecasting and prophecy. Its labors will be long. Similar proceedings, far smaller in scope, have required protracted hearings before commissions and courts.

That President Hoover sanctioned the Eastern consolidations in haste and without possessing the necessary facts for judgment is perhaps less regrettable than his attempt to put the authority of the presidency behind the plan, and to bring his influence to bear upon a quasi-judicial body. The nature of his initial participation in these rail mergers is worth remembering. The plan was not first brought to the attention of the public through the ordinary official channels, but bearing the apparently official stamp of presidential approval. In his statement announcing the scheme, President Hoover acknowledged that it would have to go before the Interstate Commerce Commission. But he expressed his belief that the proposed mergers were in the public interest and met the legal requirements. He spoke of the public benefits which consolidation would bring. He dwelt on the disadvantages due to delay in merging the roads. And he went farther. He agreed to become a fellow creator of the project which was to go before the Interstate Commerce Commission for adjudication. Technically, the rail men called him an arbitrator. He agreed to decide whether, as a part of their plan, one of the railroads should have important trackage rights over the lines of another. The idea had been worked out sufficiently to include experts to assist him. As a result of all this, his name could be included in the list of those who collaborated to complete the plan.

Immediately upon the issuance of his statement, the storm broke. Senator Couzens called the President's action unethical. Senator McKellar joined in the criticism. From that moment Mr. Hoover has been beating a retreat. Senator Fess, so frequently the spokesman in defense of the President, denied that his chief had approved the plan. The next day the railroad people explained that it was all a mistake about having the President arbitrate, they would arrange matters among themselves, and if they had to come to him as a last resort, it would only be to ask him to name an arbitrator. The following day they shifted the scene still further from the White House by formally advising the Interstate Commerce Commission that they were working on a consolidation plan.

But the President's retreat cannot undo the influence brought to bear on large sections of the public by his endorsement of the rail unifications. His retreat cannot undo the notice to the Interstate Commerce Commission that he is for the plan. An unnamed official of the Commission said at once that if the President favors the plan "it is certain that his opinion as President will carry weight." It is no criticism of the members of the Commission to refer to the fact that a majority of them will come up for renomination in the next six years, and that Mr. Hoover may be in office for that period.

The President has not merely embarrassed the Commission. He has come close to putting it on trial. He has made it doubly important for its members to refuse to be influenced by his approval of the mergers. It is equally essential that it refuse to be hurried by his dubious claim that the rail consolidations will help materially to restore prosperity.

Why the Electoral College?

SENATOR Norris, who has declined to lead a third-party movement, is willing to aid all such movements in general. He is in favor of a constitutional amendment which would abolish the electoral college. The suggestion is not a new one, but the recently revived criticism of the two old parties makes this an appropriate moment to consider the electoral machinery and the manner in which it operates in the interest of certain groups.

Incredible as it seems today, the framers of the American Constitution did not envisage a two-party system of government. They sincerely believed that a small group of the leading men in the various states could come together and choose some outstanding figure for President, without previous consultation. They therefore set up the electoral college, in which each state was to have a number of delegates equal to its combined representation in the two Houses of Congress. In order to avoid the possibility that a President might be chosen who was under obligation to the members of Congress, they specified that neither they nor any other federal office holder should be eligible for membership in the college.

This pretty plan broke down almost at once, in practice; it was speedily discovered that without some sort of prior consultation it was impossible to obtain a majority for any candidate, and the country was faced with the likelihood that every

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election would be thrown into the House of Representatives. Within ten years, therefore, the party system had appeared, identical in all essentials with that of today. Within thirty years more, or specifically in 1831, a need was felt for more definite machinery for selecting the candidate of each party, and the national convention appeared.

In the next year, the Democratic party held its first convention, and began its system of voting under the "unit rule," whereby each state delegation casts one ballot. It also adopted the famous provision that no candidate for President shall be approved who does not succeed in obtaining a two-thirds majority in the convention. Since then, the only development of importance has been the rise of the state-wide presidential primary, a growth of the first two decades of the twentieth century. By 1912, twelve states had such primary laws in force, and by 1916, the number had risen to twenty-four. Disillusionment with this type of machinery thereafter arose, and in the next six years four states repealed their primary laws. This took place despite the fact that the Progressive party in 1912 included in its platform a demand for a nation-wide preferential presidential primary (the laws of the various states of course did not bind the delegates from those states to vote indefinitely in the national convention for the candidate who won the primary; they could usually change their vote at their discretion).

The electoral college is now universally recognized as an archaic institution; most of the voters do not know or care whose are the names on the ballot, and that any member of the college should fail to follow the will of the voters would be unheard of. But the fact that it is archaic and a mere formality does not mean that the present system is just or wise, or ought to be continued. Some of the arguments against it are well summarized by Mr. George A. Schweppe in a letter published on page 247 of this issue of The New Republic. Recent history shows how true it is that when presidential elections are determined on a basis of states and not the population as a whole, there is a grave disproportion between the popular vote and the results shown in the poll of the electoral college.

In 1924, for example, the late Senator La Follette received 16 percent of the popular vote, yet he carried only one of the forty-eight states—Wisconsin. In eleven states he ran second; but the hundreds of thousands of votes he received in those states went for naught. In 1912, Roosevelt was the victim of similar circumstances: he received 27.39 percent of the popular vote, yet he carried only six states. The disproportion is strikingly shown by comparing the percentage of the popular vote with the actual electoral-college vote, in that election: Wilson received 41.85 percent of the total vote and 435 of the 531 electoral-college votes. Roosevelt, with 27.39 percent, received only 88 electoral-college votes; Taft, with 23.18 percent, obtained eight. Debs, the Socialist candidate, had 5.99 percent of the popular vote and no representation in the electoral college.

If this situation existed in regard to election to any parliamentarian body, it would constitute an excellent argument in favor of preferential voting or proportional representation; but since we elect only one President, it is obvious that the votes for the defeated candidates must be shorn of their practical significance. The question is whether they should also be shorn of their moral significance? Is there any reason, applicable to conditions today, why we should continue to choose our Presidents by votes of the states? As Mr. Schweppe points out, the present scheme attaches undue significance to states which in terms of population, industry and wealth are comparatively unimportant. It makes it possible for a few thousand votes, strategically distributed, to determine the result of an election; it makes easier the selection of a President who has only a minority of the people behind him, as in the case of Wilson, who was elected although he was opposed by six people for every four who supported him. It makes it impossible for any party to participate seriously in an election without keeping up a party machine, not merely in every state but in every congressional district; it increases the danger that such a machine will degenerate into an instrument of the spoils system in order to maintain itself between elections.

We should not, obviously, be unrealistic about the value of the proposal made by Senator Norris. If the amendment had been adopted and were put into effect, a third party would still have a difficult row to hoe. A national campaign in the United States is an enormously expensive business and will remain one. The New Republic has repeatedly pointed out the difficulties which lie in the path of any third-party movement which aims at immediate or early success; and few of these would be removed by the abolition of the electoral college. But that is no reason why we should not seek to remove such obstacles as are remediable: Senator Norris's amendment deserves to be adopted.

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An Appeal to Progressives

This is the first of a series of articles discussing the position of the contemporary progressive. They are the outcome of conversations among the editors of The New Republic which have been occurring for several months, and the gist of which may be of interest to our readers as raw material for thought and discussion. The second article, by George Soule, will appear in next week's issue.—THE EDITORS.

IT SEEMS to me that the time has come for liberals seriously to reconsider their position. The liberalism which The New Republic has represented in the past was derived primarily from Herbert Croly's book, "The Promise of American Life," written more than twenty years ago. Croly offered in this book an original interpretation of American history which in its field set a new standard of realism. In the earliest days of the Republic, the strong centralization policy of Hamilton had been established for the protection of the propertied classes, and the reaction led by Jefferson was intended as a democratic antidote. But Croly showed that when the Jeffersonians got into power, they took over the Hamiltonian structure practically intact, though at the same time they refused to abandon their democratic pretensions, thus, as he says, beginning "that career of intellectual lethargy, superficiality and insincerity which ever since has been characteristic of official American political thought." The American democratic ideal was thus more or less disingenuous from the beginning: the actual purpose of the government was one thing and the rhetoric of politics was another. The stock procedure got to be to claim freedom to do whatever one had an interest in doing as a democratic "right." For example, the Constitution guaranteed slavery, which violated in the most shocking manner the spirit of the Declaration of Independence: the Southerners claimed their legal "rights" and the Abolitionists claimed natural "rights." The contradictions involved in our government and the ideals associated with it gave rise to a double rebellion—the rebellion of the South against the government and the rebellion of the North against the Constitution. The Civil War ensued, and as a result both the Constitution and the social structure of the South were radically altered. The machine and the ideal were repaired and started on their way again.

Croly goes on, however, to show that the industrial development of the country had then given rise to a second critical situation comparable to that before the Civil War. Our society transformed itself completely: the masters of industry and commerce came to constitute a special and supremely powerful class; the lawyers, who had formerly run the government, were turned into another special class that prospered by keeping the bankers and business men out of trouble; politics was left to a third specialized class, the bosses and professional office holders—and the labor unions had produced a fourth, engaged (at that time) in fighting the other three. The old machine and ideal, even in their amended form, failed to meet the needs of the new American world by as much as the Bethlehem steel works, the Grand Central and the Singer Building were unlike Mount Vernon, Monticello or the log cabin where Lincoln was born. A reorganization as drastic was required as that which had cost us the Civil War. "The time may come," Croly wrote, "when the fulfilment of a justifiable democratic purpose may demand the limitation of certain rights, to which the Constitution affords such absolute guarantees; and in that case the American democracy might be forced to seek by revolutionary means the accomplishment of a result which should be attainable under the law." Croly did, however, still believe that this result might be attained under the law—that the wholesale corruption of politics, the shameless exploitation of labor, the ruthless wrecking by competitive business of thousands of honorable careers and the general degradation of the national standards in everything except technical skill might be dealt with at a not too distant date by our machinery of representative government. He figured this new democratic goal as a return to Hamiltonian centralization, but in the interests not merely of the propertied class but of the people as a whole—a new machinery and ideal which he says he is not afraid to have called "socialism." Everybody had again been claiming as some sort of "right" the freedom to do whatever he pleased—business men, lawyers, politicians and labor organizers—what was needed was a frank confession that genuine democracy meant not unlimited freedom, but a sensible and systematic curtailment of the rights of everybody in the interests of all.

Yet Croly believed that this result might be accomplished by an orderly series of reforms. In spite of his criticism of our political ideals and even of our political reformers, he still had faith in American politics—or rather, perhaps, in an American democratic spirit able to control life through politics, a spirit embodied for him by Lincoln, the man who had changed the state and preserved it, too. Croly differed from the genuine socialist of his time in encouraging the idea of nationalism—not the imperialistic nationalism of Great Britain and the late German Empire, but a nationalism which yet made it possible for him to support America's entrance into the European War and

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afterwards to oppose the cancellation of our debts to England and France. He expressly repudiated the ideal of an international working-class movement to fight international capitalism. It was still possible for him to feel that America constituted an ideal in itself—something isolated, unique and almost mystic. And to the extent that he believed in America, he thus believed not only in nationalism but in capitalism. He thought that the American spirit would be strong enough to compel American capitalism to restrain and reform itself.

That Croly came to lose hope as time went on—though without ever abandoning his original position—is proved by his acute distress over the failure of Wilson at Paris and by his increasing skepticism and indifference about politics. And it seems to me impossible at the present time for people of Croly's general aims and convictions to continue to believe in the salvation of our society by the gradual and natural approximation to socialism which he himself called progressivism, but which has generally come to be known as liberalism. That benevolent and intelligent capitalism on which liberals have always counted has not merely not materialized to the extent of metamorphosing itself into socialism—it has not even been able to prevent a national disaster of proportions which neither capitalists nor liberals foresaw and which they both profess themselves unable to explain. Today there are in the United States, according to the census director, something like nine million men out of work; our cities are scenes of privation and misery on a scale which sickens the imagination; our agricultural life is bankrupt; our industry, in shifting to the South, has returned almost to the horrible conditions of the English factories of a hundred years ago and the fight of the unions there for recognition is all to begin again; so many banks are failing that the newspapers do not dare to print the truth about them. And when we look to Europe west of Russia or to South America, we see only the same economic chaos, the same lack of will or capacity to deal with it and the same resultant poverty and suffering. May we not well fear that what this year has broken down is not simply the machinery of representative government, but the capitalist system itself?—and that, even with the best will in the world, it may be impossible for capitalism to guarantee not merely social justice but even security and order? May we not fear lest our American society, in spite of its apparently greater homogeneity, may not eventually collapse through sheer inefficiency and corruption as ignominiously as the feudal regime in Russia or France?

The capitalist Americans of the twentieth century are certainly more kindly and democratic people than the landlords of the feudal age; but on the other hand the capitalist system makes it easier for them not to know what they are doing, the danger, hardship and humiliation for others which their way of living implies. The feudal lord might flog or kill his serfs, but he was dealing directly with the human realities as the capitalist stockholder, for example, is not. The feudal master might be arrogant and cruel, but he was more likely to be aware of what he was doing and to accept arrogance and cruelty as among the necessities or privileges of his position. But the gallant Southerner whose interest mounts up in the bank which lends money to the textile mill has no more idea that his hand has pulled the trigger which murdered Ella May Wiggins than the cultivated Bostonian knows that the money which reaches his pocket from the shares in the South Braintree shoe factory recommended by his broker has on its way pulled the electric switch to burn Sacco and Vanzetti alive. Lawrence Dennis has recently written in The New Republic of the queer and unenviable lot of the bond salesmen, who, taking over their bonds on trust from the bankers and selling them to customers who take them on trust, have no real professional responsibility to anyone and never touch at any point the realities of the things with which they are dealing. Not only are people in a capitalist society likely to be ignorant of where their incomes come from; it is often impossible or very difficult for them to find out. And as long as a fair proportion of the bankers, the manufacturers, and the workers whom their capital and machines keep busy are making a little more money than before, no matter how unscrupulously or shortsightedly, we can believe complacently in our prosperity and even in our happiness.

That is what happened in the period which has just come to a close. The liberal Stuart Chase told all about it in his little book on "Prosperity," written before the first stock-market crash: between 1922 and 1928 the average income in the United States was increased 20 percent, but this left the average annual wage in 1929 "well below $1,500"; and during the whole period the coal, textile, shoe, leather, shipbuilding and railroad-equipment industries were all doing more or less badly and the people employed in them were on the bare edge of subsistence, the farmers were doing worse and worse, mergers and new machinery were throwing more and more people out of work—and the radio and motor industries, on which the illusion of prosperity chiefly depended, were prospering only at the expense of selling these articles to many people who didn't need them, oughtn't to have had them or couldn't afford to buy them. The salesmen and advertisers began to study not only deliberately but openly how to break down the "sales resistance" of their public: it was no longer a question merely of convincing people of the attractiveness of one's wares but of combating a positive antagonism to them. Both scientific and inspirational methods were used, but when the public began to come to, the motor-car industry was suddenly sunk and the rest of American business went with it. And is it not a serious question whether, under capitalism, any revival of American prosperity is likely to

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amount to anything more than a spurt relying on the senseless and mischievous overinflation of some other inessential industry, or would end in anything but another disaster?

And to tell the truth, it seems to me that at the present time the optimism of the Americans is flagging, that the morale of our society is weak. The faith and energy for a fresh start seem not forthcoming: a dreadful apathy, unsureness and discouragement seem to have fallen upon our life. It is as if people were afraid to go on with what they have been doing or as if they no longer had any real heart for it. I want to suggest that the present depression may be nothing less than one of the turning points in our history, our first real crisis since the Civil War. The Americans at the present time seem to be experiencing not merely an economic breakdown but a distinct psychological change. From the time of the Civil War on, all our enthusiasm and creative energy went into the development of our tremendous resources. This development had two aspects: one was the exploration of the continent and the engineering feats involved in reclaiming it, and the other the amassing of gigantic fortunes. Today the discoveries have all been made: we no longer look toward the West, as the Europeans looked to America in the Renaissance, as toward a world of untold treasures and wonders—and the excitement of mastering new rivers, forests, prairies, mountains and coasts seems now completely spent. This was already true at the time of the European War (when incidentally we were running into a business depression) but the War gave us a new objective—new discoveries, the discovery of Europe; new heroic stunts of engineering to accomplish, the transportation of our army to France. Since the War, however, we have had nothing to excite us and carry us along except the momentum of money-making. We have been trying still to find in it the exhilaration of the money-making of our period of expansion, which had been in reality largely the exhilaration of the richness, wildness and size of the continent—the breaking it into the harness of the railroads, the sudden finds of gold and silver mines. But during these last years our buoyancy, our hope, our faith has all been put behind the speed of mass production, behind stupendous campaigns of advertising, behind cyclones of salesmanship. It has been a buoyancy which has been becoming hysterical. And the reaction from a hysterical exhilaration is a slump into despondency and inertia. What we have lost is, it may be, not merely our way in the economic labyrinth but our conviction of the value of what we are doing. Money-making and the kind of advantages which a money-making society provides for money to buy are not enough to satisfy humanity—neither is a social system like our own where everyone is out for himself and devil take the hindmost, with no common purpose and little common culture to give life stability and sense. Our idolization of our aviators—our extravagant excitement over Lindbergh and our romantic admiration (now beginning to cool off) for Byrd—has been like a last desperate burst of American idealism, a last impulse to dissociate our national soul from a furious progress which was leading from automobiles and radios straight through electric refrigerators to Tom Thumb golf courses.

The old American ideal and legend of the poor boy who gets to be a millionaire, which gradually came to take the place of the legend of the poor boy who got to be President, has today lost all its romance. Not only do people not hope to be Hoover—they do not even hope so often as they did to be Henry Ford. The romance of the legend of the poor boy was the romance of democracy, of the career open to the talents—but the realities of a millionaire society have turned out to be the monstrosities of capitalism: the children of the successful poor boy get lazy and sick on their father's money and the poor boys who afterwards arrive on the scene discover, with the crippling of the grain market, the elimination of the factory worker by the improvement of the machine and the decimation of the white-collar class, even when apparently well on their way to millionairedom, by enormous business mergers, that the career is no longer open to the talents to the extent which had originally been hoped. What began as the libertarian adventure of eighteenth-century middle-class democracy seems to have ended in the *cul de sac* of capitalism. And capitalist-minded as the Americans have become, they seem to feel they are in a *cul de sac*—they do not really seem to dare to go on. In spite of the fundamental stupidity and absurdity of so much of what we have been doing, we are better educated and more intelligent than we were, and since the War we have been closer to Europe. The Buicks and Cadillacs, the bad gin and Scotch, the radio concerts interspersed with advertising talks, the golf and bridge of the suburban household which the bond salesman can get for his money, can hardly compensate him for daily work of a kind in which it is utterly impossible to imagine a normal human being taking satisfaction or pride—and the bond salesman is the type of the whole office class in our society. The brokers and bankers who are shooting themselves and jumping out of windows are disheartened by the precariousness of their profession—but would they kill themselves if they loved it? Who in the United States today really loves our meaningless life, where the manufacturer raises the workers' wages only in order to create a demand for the gadgets which for better or worse he happens to have an interest in selling them, while agriculture goes hang and science and art are left to be exploited by the advertisers, the commercial laboratories and the New York publishers' racket, or to be demoralizingly and haphazardly fed by a few drippings from the fortunes of rich men who have been embarrassed at the end of their careers to find themselves with enough money on their hands to buy out an old-fashioned empire?

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We liberals have professed not to love it, yet we have tried to believe in it, none the less. Living in a country where money changes hands so often and social position fluctuates so easily, where the minds of the working class have seemed largely to have been absorbed into the middle-class psychology, we have been unable to believe in the Marxian doctrine that capitalism must eventually give rise to class warfare, and we have perhaps never taken sufficiently seriously Marx's prediction that for many years to come the stupid automatic acquisitive instinct of humanity would still be so far ahead of its capacity for intelligent and disinterested behavior that capitalism would never even be able to drive itself with enough foresight to avoid a wreck. It used to be pointed out that in America our bourgeois solidarity was indestructible, because the stock market made it possible for anybody who had been able to save a little money to be a capitalist himself, with interests presumably identical with those of J. P. Morgan and Charlie Schwab. But can we expect that still to hold true after the late catastrophe—and if people do continue to want to be stock-market capitalists, should they be encouraged or even left to their luck? Should they not rather be shown that their interests are incompatible with capitalism itself?

Yet the truth is that we liberals and progressives have been betting on capitalism—and that most of our heroes and allies: heterodox professors like Dewey and Beard, survivors of the old republican tradition like Woodrow Wilson and Justice Holmes, able and well educated labor organizers like the officers of the Amalgamated, intelligent journalists like Lippmann and Chase, though all sincere and outspoken democrats, have been betting on capitalism, too. And now in the abyss of bankruptcy and starvation into which the country has fallen and with no sign of any political leadership which will be able to pull us out, liberalism seems to have little to offer beyond a recommendation of the public ownership of water-power and certain other public utilities, a cordial feeling that labor ought to organize in a non-social-revolutionary way and a protest, invariably ineffective, against a few of the more obviously atrocious jailings, beatings-up and murders of the working class by the owners.

Doesn't this program begin at last to seem inadequate? We have always talked about the desirability of a planned society—the phrase "social control" has been our blessèd Mesopotamian word. But if this means anything, does it not mean socialism? And should we not do well to make this perfectly plain? It may be objected that at the present time to propose socialism in America is utopian. But with such administrations as we have been getting, do not all our progressive proposals, however reasonable or modest, seem utopian? Is it not obvious that our present kind of government—Mr. King made it plain in our pages a few weeks ago—is incapable of acting in good faith in even the simplest matter of preserving the water power which is supposed to be operated for the general benefit from being exploited by private profiteers? Our society has finally produced in its specialized professional politicians one of the most useless and obnoxious classes which has perhaps ever disgraced human history—a class which seems to be unique among governing classes in having succeeded in being corrupt, uncultivated and incompetent all at once. We know that we are not even able to depend on them to protect us against the frankly disreputable race of blackmailers, thieves and assassins who dominate our municipal life. We know that we cannot even complain that the racketeers are breaking the laws which are supposed to be guaranteed by the government, because the government is hardly different from the racketeers. How can we expect them then to check the comparatively respectable scoundrels who merely steal the public utilities by more or less legalistic means?

Yet, as I say, it may be true that with the present breakdown we have come to the end of something, and that we are ready to start on a different tack. If we look back through the depressions of the last fifty years, we see that through every one of them there was always something for which the Americans could still legitimately feel ambition or enthusiasm, something to appeal to the national imagination: after 1885, there was still the West and the consolidation of the railroads; after the prolonged depression of the nineties, the final consolidation of great industries such as United States Steel and the Rooseveltian crusade against the corporations in the interests of the increasing class of those who were being injured by the process of consolidation, and Rooseveltian imperialism; after the depression during the first years of the War, our entrance into the War; and after the depression which followed the War, the motor-car and aviator period I have described. Today the further consolidation of business ruins more people even than in Roosevelt's time and there is no sign of a Roosevelt or a Wilson to revive our political imagination and to persuade the people out of luck that something is about to be done for them. It may be that the whole money-making and spending psychology has definitely played itself out, and that the Americans would be willing now for the first time to put their idealism and their genius for organization behind a radical social experiment. The future is as blank in America today as the situation is desperate: the President seems so torn between different cowardices that it is practically impossible for him to act, and when he tries to he is deadlocked by Congress; nor have the manufacturers or the financiers come forward with any constructive proposal. Yet the very blindness of the present outlook may mean that things are going to break in a new quarter. I have a feeling that just at present the people who don't deal in ideas professionally are doing more thinking than the ideologues: the man in the electric-refrigerator business who predicts a world upheaval within

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eighteen months "because revolutions usually happen in the spring"; the lawyer and real-estate dealer who says that the stock market ought to be "wiped out"; the provincial bank president who never believed in Coolidge prosperity, had been expecting the crash two years before it came and says that we shall never collect our debts from Europe; the New Yorker in the luxury trade who wants to get away from his job and go to Russia; the mother of the Middle Western family who says indignantly that the motor-car business has been trying to "lift itself by its bootstraps" and that industry ought to be controlled—are all people one can meet any day, though in the America of twenty years ago one could hardly have met them at all.

The minds of such people, furthermore, have been affected by the example of Russia far more than the professional intellectuals, who are accustomed to assuming that they are the only people who understand the Soviets and that everyone else is stupidly prejudiced against them, are readily able to grasp. During the N. E. P. period in Russia the capitalist world was able to feel the comforting assurance that the Russians had recognized the impossibilities of Communism and were inevitably relapsing into capitalism again. But with the inauguration of the Five Year Plan to eliminate capitalist business in Russia, the aspect of things changed. The apparent success of the Five Year Plan has affected the morale of all the rest of the world—and of the Americans surely not least. In the course of this winter of our capitalist quandary, the Soviets have emerged from the back pages of the newspapers and are now to be seen all over the place—even to interviews with Stalin's mother. And behind the reports of even the reactionary papers one feels as much admiration as resentment. After all, the Communist project has almost all the qualities that Americans glorify—the extreme of efficiency and economy combined with the ideal of a herculean feat to be accomplished by common action in an atmosphere of enthusiastic boosting—like a Liberty Loan drive —the idea of putting over something big in five years. Furthermore, the Russians are studying our methods—they have imported a thousand American engineers and put them at the head of enormous industrial and engineering enterprises with practically a free hand, and one would not be at all surprised to hear that Eddie Bernays had been in Moscow at the time of the recent trial. We have already, in spite of the Treasury regulation, been doing a great deal of important trading with Russia, and an important New York bank was at one time on the point of advancing to the Soviets that loan which The New Republic has been advocating but which the government in this case forestalled.

The Communists in the United States do not believe that American business or government can possibly imitate or ally themselves with the Soviets. They believe that a war against Russia is inevitable. They believe, furthermore, that they themselves constitute a small, trained, compact minority who, when American capitalism inevitably breaks down and is left helpless in its ignorance and anarchic selfishness, will be able to step in and man the works. This idea has always sounded to us absurd, but who will say that it is entirely fantastic today when the machine is obviously badly in need of repairs and there seems no political group in a position of power with either a sensible plan or good intentions? I believe that if the American radicals and progressives who repudiate the Marxian dogma and the strategy of the Communist party hope to accomplish anything valuable, they must take Communism away from the Communists, and take it without ambiguities or reservations, asserting emphatically that their ultimate goal is the ownership of the means of production by the government and an industrial rather than a regional representation. What we need in this country is a genuine opposition, and it is a long time since the liberals have been one. A genuine opposition must, it seems to me, openly confess that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are due to be supplanted by some new manifesto and some new bill of rights. It must dissociate its economics completely from what is by this time a purely rhetorical ideal of American democracy, though it has since the first days of the Republic been inextricably bound up in our minds with the capitalist system. If we want to prove that the Marxian Communists are wrong and that there is still some virtue in American democracy, if we want to confute the Marxian cynicism, the catastrophic outcome of whose "economic laws" is predicted, after all, only on an assumption of the incurable swinishness and inertia of human nature, an American opposition must not be afraid to dynamite the old shibboleths and conceptions and to substitute new ones as shocking as possible. Who knows that they may not seem less shocking to other people than to us shibboleth experts ourselves? When John Dos Passos proposed last summer in these pages that what is really needed in the United States is an Ivy Lee to sell the idea of Communism to the public, the suggestion sounded comic. Yet he immediately received a letter from an eminent publicity man in San Francisco saying that the same idea had occurred to him and that he would like nothing better than a chance to carry it out. There are signs that the liberals are beginning to have ideas as well as the publicity men: Stuart Chase has recently admitted that the past year may represent "the end of an epoch" and has offered a set of suggestions for rescuing the economic structure, and John Dewey has just proposed to Senator Norris that he lead a new political party. The extreme illiberalism of the post-Wilsonian period has had the effect of discouraging liberals: we have gone on making our complaints and proposals, but with a vigor which has tended to diminish in proportion as we became increasingly conscious that no one was paying attention to us. Who knows, however, that if we spoke out now with confidence and boldness, we might not find our public at last? EDMUND WILSON.

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Descent into Hollywood

LONG BEFORE the Man of Letters arrives in Hollywood you know he is coming. The gentlemen press agents and the W. A. S. P. S. are determined that you shall. (The WASPS, if you happen not to know, are the lady press agents. In Hollywood even publicity is sex conscious.) Every day the papers print a fresh fact about this Famous Personage who is coming out to the Coast for the express purpose of adapting his latest masterpiece to the screen. He will arrive by airplane, the sky being now the only stage entrance to Hollywood employed by people who are Figures. He will be met at the airport by any number of national and local celebrities who won't know they were there until they read about it in the papers the next morning. The film company which was lucky enough to place him under contract will send up a smaller plane loaded with flowers which will be showered upon him as he descends, quite as if he were dead and going into his grave. A huge luncheon at the Ambassador. . . . A big hook-up over a national network of broadcasting stations. . . . Pennants strung the length of Wilshire Boulevard. . . . Jazz bands. . . . Paul Whiteman in person. . . . Rudy Vallée in person. . . .

A few days later you see the famous Man of Letters at one of the beach clubs down Santa Monica way. You recognize him at once, because he so obviously has nothing to do. The next day you see him playing golf with some high hatters. The following day you see him digging in the sand again. He tries to look as if that was what he had come out especially to do. But the truth of the matter is that he is completely bewildered. The morning before he had betaken himself to the "lot" of the company for which he was to write. He had read in the papers that special palatial offices had been prepared for his use. And so they had. There was a magnificent mahogany desk on which were heaped telegrams and notes of welcome. There were impressive floral offerings. The producer, the director, the star, the scenic designer, the members of the cast—everybody in the company, it seemed, had sent expensive offerings except the stockholders. In an outer room there was a secretary with a noiseless typewriter. He pressed one of the eight or ten call bells attached to his desk and suggested to her that he dictate some letters of thanks. She raised her eyebrows. That wouldn't be necessary. The Supervisor of Public Relations who, on a lower plane of existence, used to be called the press agent, had written answers corresponding to the importance of the senders; copies had already been sent to the papers.

A little disgruntled, he started to go over the dialogue he had prepared for the film. At eleven o'clock he had an appointment with the producer who had been among the important people who hadn't seen him on landing. The producer talked about the beauties of California, animal and vegetable. The Man of Letters ventured to mention his story. Oh, yes, it was going splendidly. Conferences? Oh, yes, there would be plenty of conferences . . . later. Dialogue? Oh, Elmer Abbott, the crack Broadway dramatist, was turning it out right now. Might lose the native humor of the book? Hardly. They had brought Jim and Crow, the famous vaudeville team, out here just to furnish the wisecracks at a thousand dollars per gag. Research for the settings? Oh, Cyril Fitzgibbon had attended to all that. Fixed up some gorgeous sets. Cyril certainly knew his stuff.

They all knew their stuff. The Man of Letters gave up and went back to digging in the sand. Of course, he was being paid enormously to dig. Still . . . he had expected to be almost indispensable in the filming of his book. Nobody knew it the way he did. Why, he had *lived* the thing. Furthermore, after all the glory of his arrival, the fanfare of trumpets, the hautboys and torches, this digging in the sand was a good deal of a letdown. His only consolation was that others, equally famous on the roster of the Authors' League, were also at it with pail and shovel.

For six weeks he continued in his advisory capacity to the sand pile. At night, of course, there was a little recreation; he attended some swell parties. Then one day the producer summoned him for a conference. His picture was finished. In two weeks it would have its Broadway première. Naturally, the producer said, he would want to be in New York for that. The Man of Letters took the statement as his dismissal. He murmured that he would leave Friday on "The Chief." The producer paid no attention; for although it is imperative that you arrive in Hollywood by transcontinental plane, you can leave it, for all anybody cares, by parcel post or slow freight. The Man of Letters noticed, however, that the producer's secretary made a note of the date on her pad. For a farewell ovation, doubtless, and the press notices. . . .

He went back to his suite and packed his expensive clothes into his expensive luggage, not forgetting the shagreen cigarette case, the platinum ankle bangle to be worn swimming, and other unpretentious little place favors that he had received at dinner parties. Alone, he went to the station. Alone, he boarded the train. There was no farewell ovation. Disappointed, he settled himself in his compartment and opened the papers; he had bought several. At least he would read the elegant eulogies on his departure. He imagined the head-

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lines: "Prominent Man of Letters Quits Film Colony Today. Screen Society Mourns Loss of Brilliant Writer." What he saw was: "Prominent Man of Letters Arrives in Hollywood Tomorrow. Important Film Folk to Strew Flowers on Plane of Arriving Dramatist and Prize Winner. Enormous Ovation Planned. . . . "

The Man of Letters was aggrieved. In Hollywood, apparently, it was a case of one-way traffic. He was depressed. Across the entire continent he was depressed. His much-heralded trip, although not unprofitable, had certainly been flat and stale. At the beginning it had had all the excitement of an Old Home Week. In the middle it had been a pale imitation of New York night clubs, Main Street and Coney Island. In the end—nothing.

Yet once back in New York, to his utter amazement, the whole episode blossomed. Everybody was asking him what he thought about Hollywood. He found that he thought quite a few things about it. And he thought them wittily. At the club, at literary gatherings, in esoteric circles, he became suddenly a storm center of laughter. He waxed anecdotal; they lapped it up. He exaggerated; they wanted him to exaggerate more. He parodied the film folk. The intelligentsia rocked with laughter. As a Hollywood cynic the Man of Letters was a decided success.

Of course, among his own little group of serious thinkers he was neither flippant nor facetious. In grave tones he lamented the deplorable things that were done in Hollywood to pieces of literature. Take his book, for instance. The plot had been changed, the characters had been changed, the ending had been changed. In fact everything had been changed, except the title, and that, because of all the other changes, no longer had any point. Well, but hadn't he protested? Oh, there was no use. You couldn't talk to people like that; they spoke a different language. He didn't say that the fact that there would be changes had been stipulated before he signed the contract. He contented himself with saying that the movies had put in a lot of cheap humor and gaudy sets. That was the trouble with the movies. . . .

Brilliantly, if profanely, he told them at length what was the trouble with the movies. But he neglected to state that the chief trouble with them was their unintelligent habit of buying from men of letters material which was utterly unsuited to screen presentation. Nor did he add that the trouble with men of letters is their unintelligent habit of selling it. But, his friends inquired, didn't the film people pay him handsomely? Of course they did. If it hadn't been for that . . . well, he felt it was his duty to take the money when they offered it. Now he could subsidize himself while he was writing something worth while.

Contrary to his expectations, the critics did not find his picture as cheap as he had confided to his friends that they most certainly would. Instead, they praised the plot, they praised the characterization, and most especially they praised the piquancy of the humor and the artistry of the settings. The author bowed and took the curtain calls. The picture added surprisingly to his fame. On the strength of its humorous lines he was invited to do a sketch for the 1930 "Gayeties," the producers of which didn't know, of course, that much of the humor of the picture had been contributed by the vaudeville team at so many thousand per gag.

Firmly established now as an authority on the movies, the Literary Personage turned out a few special articles in his spare time. Adroitly he abused the pictures. The witty things he had said to his friends he repeated for publication. The intelligentsia continued to laugh and the editors continued to forward fat checks. He wasn't in the least afraid that the moving-picture people might read what he had written and take offense. One of the extemporaneous witticisms that he most frequently repeated was that the noble savages of the West Coast can neither read nor write; like all primitives they express themselves in pictures. Actually, he was convinced that even if the producers felt themselves insulted, they would never let a little thing like that stand in the way of buying the movie rights to his next book if they thought they could make big money out of it; the movie people are so crassly materialistic.

That they could make big money out of it he himself was confident. The more he worked on it, the more he felt that it was sure-fire movie stuff. The book would be on the publisher's fall list. If it were an immediate success the movie people might want to begin production on it right away. That would be along about February. New York is pretty disagreeable then—sleety and cold. Of course, there was the tragic ending . . . perhaps he ought to end it happily. This sad-ending business was just a fetish with authors. There was more art, really, in bringing a complication to a happy conclusion. This time he'd take a house . . . in the Beverly Hills section. He thought of the blue sea and the purple bougainvillea. It wasn't so bad . . . digging in the sand.

FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON.

Last Word

No one who knew this boy
Shall weep for anything
But that another lover
Is lost to spring.
No girl shall mourn her own
For earth on this boy's breast
Who went the single way,
Ardent and unpossessed,
Loving the flesh like glass
Through which shone a flame
That neither girl nor boy
But only spring might claim.

MARIE DE L. WELCH.

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Two American Boys in the U. S. S. R.

The two American boys who are the authors of this series of letters worked their way over to Russia and found jobs in Moscow, Robin Kinkead as assistant to an American newspaper correspondent and his brother David as an English teacher. Their letters, addressed to their family, were written without thought of publication. The fifth instalment will be published next week.—THE EDITORS.

WE WENT to the opera house to hear "Boris Godounov." We had good seats in the parterre (got them half-price, two and a half rubles each) but the opera bored me. It was too long and had too many dull moments. In every intermission—and it seemed as if there were about a hundred of them—we would dash out to the buffet and swig some tea and have a pipe of *mahorka,* and watch the people walking around in a circle. They actually do that. In the rooms for promenade they get in couples and walk in a circle around the room, like animals in a cage with nothing else to do. We stood on the edge blowing out clouds of *mahorka* smoke and watching the faces of the people strolling by. There was one cute girl there, who was nicely dressed into the bargain. The girls make heroic attempts to dress well and some of the results are pleasing, but others are positively ludicrous. It's rather pathetic to see these girls trying to ape what they think are Paris fashions, instead of developing something of their own. They will probably do this later, when a lot of the bright ones come along and they get enough factories going to furnish good material to the masses.

R. K.

Spring is practically here. The sun shines warmly every day and most of the mud is dried up. The buds haven't come out on the trees yet, and the grass isn't as green as it will be, but there are wild flowers out in the country. I have discarded my big warm coat and we have both stopped wearing hats. I think I shall take a walk into the country one of these days to see what the spring looks like out there. I never saw anything like this hot weather to bring out the kids. The yard swarms with them all day long. There's a reason for their seeming so numerous, as the people of the U.S.S.R. are multiplying at the rate of three and a half million every year, while all the other countries of western Europe put together multiply at the rate of only two and a half millions. They are a bit scrawny looking, like the French rats, but I see an occasional sturdy one. They don't seem to carry their scrawniness with them through life, though, because the men here all seem to be hardy and strong. The soldiers, especially, look healthy and well fed. They all have that big-boned, ruddy-complexioned, Slavic look about them. Every time we stir out into the yard about ten of the little brats come rushing up to us with cries of "Hello, Uncle!" "Where are you going, Uncle?" "Good day, Uncle." They hang to our hands and trousers so that we always have a struggle before we get away from the house. They have a queer idea of play. The biggest one beats up the next size under him, and as soon as this victim can get away he beats up someone a little smaller than he, and so on down the line until he gets down to some of the little tots who have all they can do to keep on their feet, much less fight. These in their turn go off and maltreat any strange cats or dogs that happen to be so unfortunate as to be snooping around the neighborhood at the time. I suppose the dogs take it out on the cats and the cats on the rats, but I don't know.

Today at the Institute of Foreign Languages, while I was waiting to meet a friend who was going to arrange about some lessons for me, a young Communist girl student came up and asked me if I was a student there. I told her that I wasn't a student, but was an English teacher at AMO. Then she was interested. "Are you English?" "No, American." "How long have you been here? Why did you come? Are you a Communist? Why not? Is there a Young Communist organization in America? How many members? You speak well for having been here so short a time. Do you like it here? How long do you intend to stay? How old are you? Why don't you join the Comsomol (Young Communists) here?" "Perhaps I shall." "We are going to have a shooting lesson in this room in a minute, won't you join us?" "With pleasure." "Have you ever studied shooting? No? Well, then, can you shoot?" "Better than you, I think." "Are there many cowboys in America now?" Her face fell when I said no. Pretty soon an army officer came and kicked everyone out of the room except one man. I think just one at a time was allowed in the room. My little Communist friend sat in the dining room and went on with my quizzing. She said that she had been studying English for five months and suggested that we talk in that language for a while. We tried it but it was a failure, so we had to go back to Russian. "Are you a worker?" "No; but I worked my way over here on boats." "What does your father do? Well, if your father is an engineer, why are you a sailor?" "Because I want to write and I thought I ought to see a bit of life and the world." "Oh! Were you captain or mate or anything?" "Quite the opposite." "You ought to study science, too." "Perhaps I will." "Why aren't there any more

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cowboys in America?" "Because there are too many fences." (I had to resort to the sign language to explain to her what a fence is.) I felt as though I had been through a third degree when I finally broke away. It was fun though. I didn't ask her name and she didn't ask mine. I think that was the one askable question she didn't ask me. If I want to see her again I can find her at the Institute any time. She was attractive, but not very pretty. Brown hair, brown eyes, healthy, good humored.

The papers have been full of the suicide of the revolutionary poet Mayakovsky for the past few days. Everyone is trying to guess why he did it. Some say he was sick, others that he was disappointed in love, and others that he killed himself because he couldn't regulate himself to life, that he was really of the old world. (He was thirty-six years old.) In his writings and public actions he was of the new, but in his private life he still clung to the old, and, tired of fighting against it, he killed himself. Others just say that all Russian poets die young and let it go at that. D. K.

The whole town was excited about the funeral. The road out to the crematorium that the procession was to go along was lined with people and the bus service was disrupted so that I had to walk out to the place. There were more big crowds there and I pushed through them and informed the police that I was an American correspondent and they let me right in. I also had to turn around and let the crowd know how it was, too, because they were yelling: "Hey, don't you let that guy in! How does he get that way?" When they learned that I was an American reporter they were satisfied. Inside I met my old pal, the director of the crematorium, and he introduced me to some guys with whom I talked in French. Then I met two of my Communist friends whom I used to teach at the BCHX and they pointed out the important people to me, notably the woman whom the poet had loved and mentioned in his farewell poem.

When the coffin came into the yard, carried on a truck and preceded by a military band, a bunch of guys rushed through behind it and tried to force their way into the crematorium. The police there couldn't do a thing with them, so a bunch of Red soldiers came and helped, and still they couldn't do anything until the mounted police came along and rode their horses through the mob. They even forced their horses right up on the steps of the building to disperse the gang there. After that the ceremony got under way, and I left, climbing over the back wall and finding a bus, which brought me home.

Tonight we are going to have a little Easter celebration at our own house. First we are going to church to see what they do there and then at twelve o'clock we are coming home to feast on *pascha, kulich* and vodka. I bought a lot of supplies for them to make the stuff with yesterday. Easter is a big day here still, although it used to be much bigger. People who have lived here right along tell me that it is a relief not to have the church bells ringing all the time. It is against the law now to ring church bells. In the old days, part of the celebration was to ring bells, each person paying something for the privilege of being allowed to ring them himself. It was supposed to help their souls in some way, but it didn't help the tempers of those who were waked up early in the morning by the unholy, or rather holy, din, and kept awake at night. R. K.

All day the streets have been dotted with people carrying *pascha* and *kulich* to the churches to be blessed. They carry the stuff wrapped in what looks like white dishcloths, and from each bundle an artificial flower or two sticks out. They take the *pascha* and *kulich* to the church, and the priest makes a cross over it with his hand and sprinkles a few drops of holy water on it. No Christian can eat the stuff with a clear conscience unless it is blessed in this way beforehand. I guess the priest gets a fair portion out of each person, too. I counted fifty of these people with their white bundles while walking about three blocks. Their being white makes them seem more noticeable and numerous. With the curds, eggs, butter and sour cream which we bought, A—— mixed up some *pascha,* but we didn't have any *kulich,* after all, because it was too much trouble to make and it is against the law for the stores to sell it, so you can't buy it. The *pascha* is good enough plain. I wish they had it every day instead of only once a year. We dispensed with the blessing, but in spite of this we didn't get indigestion. At twelve o'clock midnight we went out to see the services in some of the churches. They were having ceremonies in each one. I had hoped there would be a lot of nice singing, but there was only a little.

I see quite a few bums sleeping about in the sun on sidewalks, on lumber piles and in vacant lots. If I were going to sleep on the ground somewhere I think I should wait until it got a bit warmer. But it doesn't seem to bother these bums. Maybe they're immune to colds. A bad thing about the warm weather is that it enables beggars to expose their stumps without getting frost-bitten. I saw one the other day with about six inches of bare arm stump wagging about in the open air. A naked stump looks bad enough when it is still, but when you see the man bobbing it about it is positively grotesque. I wonder how they found this out. I saw one other waving about a fourth of a leg in the sunlight. These are the only two that I have observed, so you can see that they are not thick about the town. X—— would probably say that the waving of countless beggars' stumps was the main manifestation of a Moscow spring. D. K.

The other night Dak and I had dinner with Mrs. C—— and M—— at the Savoy Hotel. A very good meal and a nice talk afterward. In the

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matter of food, things are great. I love my tea every morning, and keep right on being very fond of the sausage. It is a mystery to me why we don't get tired of sausage every single morning. Then when I eat in hotels I get enough delicacies to satisfy me. For instance, at the Savoy we had turkey. When and if we get better quarters we shall have eggs every morning for breakfast. I can buy them at my store, by means of my correspondent's card, for forty cents a dozen. The only reason I don't have them here is that I should have to feed the whole family at the same time, and that is a little too much for my purse. They won't permit themselves that luxury, and I can't sit there and eat eggs without giving them some too. The same thing with butter. So we are now well fixed except for the matter of tobacco. I often think of home, where people have a separate room to eat in, another to cook in, another to lounge in, and still more to sleep in—closets to hang your clothes in, bathtubs, stoves to boil water on which give heat at the turn of the wrist, and easy chairs to sit in. My easy chair is my bed. But my life is one to be envied, even if devoid of these comforts. It is full of excitement, interest, curiosity, movement.

R. K.

The day before the first of May the whole town blossomed out in red. Every house had one or more red flags hanging from it. All the store windows were filled with red banners and pictures of Lenin, Stalin, Kalinin and the rest. Some of the bigger stores had little scenes, cut out of cardboard, in the windows. A typical one shows the Russian worker cleaning house. Tsars, officers, capitalists, priests, in fact everybody that is symbolic of the old regime, go tumbling head over heels down the steps and out into the street before the worker and his vigorous broom. They are big, window-size cartoons with the figures cut out of cardboard. I like them. There were big "May First" signs all over, too. On the Opera House there was one of these signs, and above it, stretching all across the front, was a red banner with "Workers of the World, Unite!" written on it. All over town were stars made of red electric lights. When I saw all these electric-light signs I realized for the first time that they don't have any here except on occasion. The Red Square was lit up by signs and searchlights, and various worker groups marched back and forth in it until late at night. The next day, May 1, I got up at about eight-thirty, ate breakfast and then went down to the center to see the excitement. Bob had got a ticket to sit inside the Square, on the strength of his correspondent's card, but they would not let him have one for me. I went down and stood just outside the exit of the Red Square, which was just as good as being inside anyway, because all the troops had to pass by there, too. There were no buses or trams running, so I had to walk down. Ordinarily, it takes about half an hour to walk to the Square, but now for about half the way there was a solid crowd about the thickness of a big-game crowd, so it took longer than usual to fight my way through. All the streets were filled with groups from various factories and office buildings, and *comsomolets* and pioneers carrying banners, posters and clownish cardboard likenesses of priests, capitalists and such. The banners and posters were so thick that if you looked at a crowd on a slant from up above, you could hardly see the heads of the people. I got down there just as the first troops were marching out.

First a lot of infantry marched by singing. It was fun hearing so many of them singing together. Then sailors came by. They were the best dressed of all, all dolled up in dark blue uniforms, round white hats with ribbons down the back, striped undershirts and white gloves. The cavalry was the most exciting. Whole troops of horses came charging by, excited and frothing at the mouth after their gallop through the Square, with their riders waving sabers in the air. When the horse-drawn guns came along it looked like a chariot race. The teams ran four abreast and were matched, some pure white, some dappled grey, black and tan. They almost pulled the drivers off their seats in their eagerness. There were troops of bicycles and motorcycles (Harley-Davidsons). The motorcycles had sidecars and in each sidecar was a machine gun. Then trucks with machine guns and big tanks that shook the ground, and little tanks. When the parade was about halfway through, a whole flock of little airplanes flew over, followed by another flock of big, slow-moving bombers.

After the last soldier had marched out of the Square the militiamen still held me and the rest of the citizens in check by backing their horses into us. I wondered what this was for and soon saw that it was in order to leave a space for the diplomats and military attachés to walk out and get into their cars. They walked within a few feet of where I stood fighting to keep my place in the front rank. They certainly looked their part, every one of them, suave, polished, immaculately dressed and perfectly at ease. The military attachés looked as if they had just stepped out of some fancy military-dress ball. When they had gone by and buzzed away in their cars (mostly Buicks) the militiamen reluctantly let us go. All the side streets leading into the Square were guarded by militiamen to keep the people from rushing in from all sides and stampeding in there. I had on my leather suit and must have looked like a soldier of some kind, because I walked right through the line without being touched, while on all sides other people were being grabbed and put back where they came from. I went clear around to the other side of the Square, broke through one last line of militiamen, joined a group of paraders from some organization and marched through the Square with them. I think the only thing I missed by not having a ticket into the Square was that I didn't see the heads of the government standing in their box. On the whole, it

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reminded me of "Big Game Day" multiplied several times and spread over the greater part of a city. Seeing all the soldiers, with their bands and their singing, especially the sailors and the cavalry, gave me a strong desire to join the army. I walked home about two in the afternoon, but the Red Square was filled with marching crowds until dark.

I ate lunch in the student *stolovaya* in the basement of the house next to ours, and then A—— and I went for a row on the river. That was fun. We rented a nice rowboat with two sets of oars for seventy-five kopecks, and rowed up and down the river for an hour. On the way back we stopped to watch a balloon take off. It rose slowly, just missed the trees and went off to the south on a long slant, getting smaller and rounder. It would be fun to go up in a balloon and see where the wind would take you. When the balloon got too small in the distance to be interesting any more we went on home and ate dinner. After dinner I was too tired to do anything more than read for a little while and then go to bed. D. K.

Yesterday I saw a moving sight—a man standing up waiting to hear whether or not he would be shot. It was the verdict of the Lena Goldfields trial. They said it would come at one o'clock, so I went round there a little before that, only to have to wait until five. Before I got into the courtroom I was all for having this guy Bashkirtsess, who was Kolchak's hangman and who burned a factory down, given the death sentence and the others good stiff jail sentences. But when I got in and saw the four human beings sitting on a bench looking worried I felt sorry as hell for them and hoped for the mildest of sentences. One fellow particularly, Ryvov de Ribon. He is young and good looking, and I thought what a blight it would be to him to have to serve ten years in jail. It would cut out just the best part of his life. He got only one year, the other two five and six years, and the hangman ten years. The judges said they sentenced this last to death but commuted it to ten years on account of his low mentality and irresponsibility. I couldn't realize that I was actually in the supreme court of Russia. It was an ordinary room, with chairs in it for the audience, and at one end a raised table with a red cloth, with pictures of Lenin, Marx and Engels behind it. I was wearing my rough-neck sweater, and walked calmly in and took a seat along with the Russian reporters at the press table. It all seemed so matter of fact that I couldn't imagine that I was in a court where a man's life hung in the balance. I know that if I were a judge I should have let them off, because they looked like just ordinary troubled human beings. Three judges came in, dressed in ordinary clothes, and one of them read off the verdicts. One of the accused could hardly control himself and kept his face buried in his hands. The hangman didn't change expression throughout. R. K.

DAVID AND ROBIN KINKEAD.

Meditations upon Death

I

The heron-billed pale Cattle Bird,
That feeds on some foul parasite
Of a Moroccan flock or herd,
Crosses the narrow Straits to light
In Algeciras gardens and there rest
Until the morning break as on a dark breast.

Often at evening when a boy
Would I carry to a friend—
Hoping more substantial joy
Did an older mind commend—
Not such as are in Newton's metaphor
But actual shells of Rosse's level shore.

Greater glory in the sun,
An evening chill upon the air,
Bid imagination run
Much on the Great Questioner:
What He can question, what if questioned,
Can with a fitting confidence reply.

II

I asked if I should pray
But the Brahmin said
"Pray for nothing, say
Every night in bed,
'I have been a king,
I have been a slave,
Nor is there anything,
Fool, rascal, knave,
That I have not been,
And yet upon my breast
A myriad heads have lain.'"

That he might set at rest
A boy's turbulent days
Mohini Chattergee
Spoke these, or words like these:
I add in commentary

"Old lovers yet may have
All that time denied—
Grave is heaped on grave
That they be satisfied—
Over the blackened earth
The old troops parade
Birth is heaped on birth
That such cannonade
May thunder time away
Birth-hour and death-hour meet
Or as great sages say,
Men dance on deathless feet."

W. B. YEATS.

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Washington Notes

The Extra Session Nightmare—Leaders Without Heart or Skill—The Lucas-Norris Incident—The Insurgents

FROM A neutral corner it seems fairly clear that underneath all the noise, confusion, bitterness, bickering and backbiting which characterize the resumption of Congress after the Christmas holidays, the real question of importance remains whether or not an extra session of the new Congress will be forced. You just cannot get away from that question. It was, I pointed out in this place before the session began, the thought in the mind of every political actor on the Washington stage. It still is. Furthermore, notwithstanding the authoritative statements of some more or less profound writers in this sector, the answer to the question is as uncertain now as it was weeks ago. The relief measures are out of the way, but nothing else is. Not an appropriation bill has been really moved, and between the battles over Muscle Shoals, the proposal to pay World War veterans' certificates in cash now instead of at maturity, and several other things, there is so much of a time-consuming nature that no informed person believes that anything but the routine measures can go through. The situation is clear enough—and ordinarily would justify the before-mentioned profound statements that an extra session will be avoided. The President, the House of Representatives and an overwhelming majority of the Senate sincerely desire to adjourn on March 4 and then not meet again until December. The reason for the extreme uncertainty at present is the character of the administration leadership on the floor of the Senate. Its inadequacy grows ever more apparent.

The small group, led by Borah, that wants the special session can outtalk, outplay and outlast any other combination in the Senate, regardless of numbers. Astute leadership on the regular Republican side could easily make an extra session impossible without resort to an open filibuster—and an open filibuster is the thing which neither Mr. Borah, who openly wants a special session, nor the others who secretly want it, desire to have forced upon them. In the first place it will inevitably be followed by a vehement journalistic denunciation from one end of the country to the other, the "business interests" and those newspapers which represent the "business interests" being solidly set against the special session as a hindrance to business recovery. Furthermore, a filibuster, except upon some great issue, is an undignified senatorial procedure and I repeat, if the administration leadership were strong, the special-session advocates could be put in this corner and overcome.

There is, however, more than a little doubt that among the Watsons, Reeds, Binghams, Smoots, Goffs and the rest there is enough force and skill to prevent the undercover time wasting which will bring about that unbreakable jam in the last days, resulting in failure of the appropriation bills. It is not only that they lack skill but they—these so-called administration leaders—lack heart as well. Their "coöperation" with the White House is pitifully weak and inadequate—quite obviously so. For this, of course, the White House blames the Senate leaders and the Senate leaders blame the White House. The truth is that complete, cordial and effective coöperation between an executive with the personality, character and outlook of Mr. Hoover, and politicians such as those through whom he is compelled to deal in the Senate, is absurdly impossible. They never have "coöperated" cordially and they never will. Under such conditions, I do not see how anyone at this stage of the proceedings can make authoritative statements about the extra session. Yet there are quite a few doing it.

The furore created by the Lucas-Norris incident, repercussions of which are still heard in the Senate—and will be for some time—has so concentrated attention upon the rift in the Republican party between regulars and progressives that very little notice is taken of the rift in the Democratic ranks. It is true that it is considerably smaller and at present nothing like so bitter. Nevertheless, it exists. If and when the Democrats gain control of the Senate, it will become much more apparent. Even now it is clear enough that Leader Robinson in the Senate has nothing like the control over his Democratic membership that he had last session.

This is partly due, I suppose, to the resentment among his followers over that still remembered declaration of harmony and "coöperation" in which he joined six other Democratic "leaders" soon after the November election. By some this was construed as a surrender of Democratic principles, the result of which would be to throw away the fruits of the November victory. The efforts of Leader Robinson to disabuse their minds of this idea by Senate speeches and opposition to certain of Mr. Hoover's relief measures were partially but not wholly successful. He still holds intact a majority of the Democratic Senators behind him, but discontent and dissatisfaction, not before in evidence, have weakened him beyond question.

Another—and probably the basic reason for the existence of a Democratic rift—is the presence in the Senate ranks of several inherent insurgents upon whom party lines hang just as loosely as they do on Norris or Borah or any of the others in the Republican Progressive group. For instance, there is Wheeler of Montana, who in 1924 bolted the Davis-Bryan ticket, ran as a candidate for Vice-President with the elder La Follette, was received back into the Democratic fold without question after the election, but is just as irregular now as he was before. And then there is Dill of Washington, who is as independent in party matters as a man well can be, just as apt to vote against party strategy as outlined by party leaders as to vote with them. And there are others equally eager to revolt against a policy of conservatism and coöperation such as the Raskob-Shouse management has mapped out.

In the next Senate, too, there will be Mr. Costigan of Colorado, once a member of the Bull Moose party, since then a Progressive, only lately going over on the Democratic side because it seemed slightly more sympathetic to his views, but not in the least to be regarded as a Democrat—certainly not as a Democrat who can be counted upon to follow a conservative Senate leader. All of this is merely indicative of the lack of solidarity in both of the

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two major parties. In each there is an element hostile to the dominant faction, diverging sharply in outlook, belief and character. The insurgents in each have far more in common with each other than with the recognized party leadership, just as between the party leaders of each there is no real difference except the label. Under such circumstances it does seem ridiculous that if there is not a third party, which Dr. Dewey urges and which Mr. Norris and Mr. Borah reject, there should not be at least a redivision of the two old parties along logical and sensible lines. The present divisions in both make American parties and American politics more or less of a joke.

Washington. T. R. B.

No Culture but the Opera

SHE HAS the seat opposite mine, and sits there in her black cloak of velvet slightly faded and touched up with a bit of fur; where it opens in front the black silk of her dress appears, full of tucking. A number of satchels and parcels lie around her, and among them I see what I know is a lunch box; she will make a little economy. Her eyes are blue, not stupid, not sharp, but clear, alive and full of a sure good sense that would seem somehow to belong by right to every human being. At a boarding-house last summer in the mountains, she tells me all the young men called her mother; a lot of young engineers there on some construction work, every one of them said she looked like his mother—anyway that's how it was. She talks a slow, sweet drawl, as if we were out walking in a dream.

She has been in Boston visiting her daughter, who married some sort of government inspector. Yes, you see her son-in-law is a Yankee, but he's a mighty nice one and very nice to her. Every year she goes to visit them in these places where he has to be—the places she's been in! But she tells them she has to stop now and stay at home some, she's gettin' too old to run around. They always send her the ticket of course.

I learn presently that her father was a Kentuckian, educated at the University of Virginia. He had studied too hard there, or maybe had enjoyed himself too much; at any rate, when she and her sister were so high, his health broke down, the doctors prescribed a warmer climate, and the family came to Texas. He had a cough all his life, but he lived to be seventy. She tells me how her young husband heard what they said about Carroll, way out there near the border. Four railroads were going to make a junction there and ev'ything would be wonderful; her husband was a young lawyer. But there wasn't any railroad at all till long after they had moved away and gone to Marfa. Of course Carroll then was just a wide place in the road, but they liked it and had a good time.

"But," I say, "how did he live, there couldn't have been many lawsuits?"

"Well," she says, "he was on one side of ev'y case there was."

I do not want her to take too much for granted, and so I say I suppose there was nobody to do any work for you, you had to do everything yourself. No, there was one old woman, Aunt Ellen, the best old soul, and they had her; she would do anything. They used to have a fine time. It seems that all your life there are so many nice things. Her mother died when she was born, and she had a stepmother; and when she was seven, her stepmother took her and her little half-brother on a visit back to the old home in Alabama. They went out from New Orleans on a boat across Lake Pontchartrain and then by Mobile up the river to Bufford's Falls. Long after, she had met a lady whose father had owned Bufford's Falls, who had married a preacher and come to Texas. Soon after Alabama they were all on a visit to her grandfather in Kentucky. It was after the war, of course, but the darkies had just stayed on, they didn't know they were free. The quarters ran a mile, a string of little white houses. Her grandfather looked after them as long as he could, but the day came when they had to go. "Look here," he said, "you all got to have names, you know." So he took a sheet of paper, it was right funny, he just sat there giving out names to them just as he used to give them shoes and whiskey at Christmas, just exactly. John Linen he named one of them, and some of them said they'd take the name of a man they'd belonged to once before they came to our family; they were just like chillun. One thing happened was interesting. A darky her grandfather's father had freed had gone off to Boston and got rich. So when her grandfather married, this man sent a big silver castor for a wedding present, her daughter has it now in Boston, everybody goes on about it. Another freedman sent a silver butter knife.

She likes to have a little conversation with people, just talk with them. But in Boston, where she was walking in the park, they didn't seem to care about that. She spoke to several people but they were very cool. But one lady said, "Oh, I'm so glad you spoke, you're from the South aren't you, it gives me a thrill, you talk just like a Negro."

"There you are," I said.

"'Well,' I thought, 'and the niggers up here talk like you, too.' But of course I didn't say that, I just thought it, you know. I don't believe she meant any harm. Another lady said she certainly was glad I spoke to her, it seemed she hadn't talked to anybody for ages. She was from somewhere way up to the north from there, I forget, like Vermont, there're so many of those places."

She adds presently that she had always liked her neighbors to live quite close. She used to think she wanted to live to be very old, but now she was not so sure. Everybody you love would be dead and you'd be so lonely.

Her daughter had been in all sorts of pleasant places—in Florida, Carolina, Virginia, Philadelphia, Boston, everywhere. Seems the longer you live the more wonderful the world is. That's why sometimes she thought she mightn't mind the idea of death so much, you'd get a little more idea what the world was, maybe. Maybe not.

At Jacksonville I have to tell her the name of the station. Which is one of the reasons, she explains, she likes those day coaches, she can hear the names of the places; the man goes all through the car calling them out, not just puts his head in the door the way he does in these pullmans. Jacksonville—her husband had a cousin born there. The father and mother died when he was little; he became a ranger, way out on the frontier. They said when all the Indians were killed or driven away, he cried.

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She fancies you may talk too much, and sits quiet a while, with her hands in her lap, looking out of the window.

I too am quiet and sit there thinking of this world, these soft seats we sink into, that luxurious observation car behind us, all lounging chairs, cigarettes, newspapers, soda fountain with onyx knobs, glass. The Indians had been gone only three years when she moved to Carroll.

I sit looking out on this divine country, open, clear, stretching for miles; in some way it is nature reduced to the abstract, which is the reason for its hold on us perhaps. The thought comes into my mind of a remark I heard lately that a professor at Columbia made, and that was quoted sadly to me by a little student from Texas, a freshman. Texas, the professor said, has no culture. Except a little opera now and then. Well—

In the first place, I am not a born Texan and so am not stirred by the loyal-son motive; in the second place, there is in Texas the amount of traveling opera, of concerts, of lectures, of Theatre Guild and of visiting celebrities, usual to our American provinces, perhaps more than in many states, and no little home music, perhaps because of certain German origins; we will not stay on these points. Nor need we mind how little brains the professor may have. But what of the clear humanity of this old lady? What of this friendly life she knows and has lived so long? Or, taking a wider range, what of the laws of hospitality on the ranches; or that frontier practice and possibility, when you are away, of leaving the house unlocked for passers-by to use, the only rule being that things are to be left as found? What of this curious purity and openness of mind by which an old woman has seen so many places and people, with fresh interest and a clean heart, without suspicion and without grudging? What of the wide, generous ways and new energies of this life in such a country, and the accumulation of knowledge and feeling that grows from them? What is culture?

In sum, what a shame that, in America, where, if we are to get anywhere, a new culture myth has to be found, where studying plaster casts and flat translations of Dante, listening to imported music, or even a profounder study of the great classic poets, cannot forever hope to express our life, such drool—from a college chair, may God save our country!—should be dealt out to young people, the first and last of whose education must lie in the definition of culture that they arrive at!

Whatever thoughts have been going on behind those clear eyes, the old lady has now come back to her family—her other daughter will meet her at the train when we get to San Marcos; I will see her. Of course, she always declares that both of her daughters are very good looking. They get furious at her for it. But she always says parents must admire their children, since nobody else will. Of course, they are mighty sweet to her too. "Well, naturally," I say, with a bow, old-style, "and well they might be!"

She smiles,

"Well, I don't know about that. But they have to love their mother, I suppose."

Why, no, I say, not at all. Doesn't she know that it's the fashion to dislike your parents? You are always hearing someone say, of course, I never liked my mother; I always hated my father, you know.

"What! Your mother?" she exclaims, with some consternation in her eyes, and then, after a moment, a kind of timeless security, and then a twinkle.

"Yes," I say.

"Why," she says, "I even loved my stepmother."

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Bail for Communists

SIR: In an article by Edmund Wilson on a recent hearing before the Fish Committee in Washington, a statement is made in referring to me that I had "just announced that the Civil Liberties Union will no longer undertake to raise bail for Communists."

Because that half-statement does not convey the correct impression of our stand, may I say that the Union has declined to raise bail in Communist cases only until the Communist party comes across with some guarantee against bail-jumping in the future. The next move is, therefore, up to the Communist party. The suspension of bail is temporary until such satisfactory assurances are forthcoming.

ROGER N. BALDWIN.

New York City.

Abolishing the Electoral College

SIR: The liberal and progressive forces of this country could get somewhere if they would stop talking about the formation of a third party and devote their energies toward doing away with the Electoral College, as Senator Norris has suggested in his reply to Professor Dewey.

Under the present system, a candidate, to receive the electoral votes necessary to insure his election for President, has to carry a certain number of individual states. If he succeeds, he gets all the electoral votes of those states, even though his majority may be a very slight one in each of them. If he fails to carry these states, he gets no votes whatever, even though he may have been defeated by a very few popular votes in each state. In this way, a few thousand votes, strategically distributed, have determined national elections in the past and will continue to do so as long as the Electoral College method is in use. As a result, also, undue importance is placed upon certain pivotal states, which are of minor importance economically and socially as compared to others, whereas other states, either with vital interests at stake or with far greater populations, are deprived of exercising their full strength in determining the result of the election. I have heard it said, for example, that a vote in Ohio is often worth ten in New England, whereas the same vote in Alabama, Texas or in certain states in the Northwest may be of no value at all.

The Electoral College also makes it necessary for a party to maintain a political machine in every congressional district if it wants to give its candidate a fair chance of election. These machines are naturally out for everything they can get in the way of offices, favors and the like, and being the backbone of their respective parties, they invariably tend to become conservative and corrupt in time. It should be remembered also that both the Republican and the Democratic parties were liberal and humanitarian at the time they were organized. Both of them had their birth in reform movements. It is the system under which they have had to operate that has made them what they are today. A like fate awaits Professor Dewey's third party unless the system to which it will have to adjust itself is changed, no matter how idealistic it may be today or how much sacrifice and labor may be needed to launch it. The election of the President and Vice-President by popular vote, instead of by the Electoral College, will do more toward breaking up the corrupt and unwieldly political line-up of today than any well intentioned, but abortive, movement for a third party at this time.

GEORGE A. SCHWEPPE.

New York City.

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A Correction

SIR: The president of The United States Daily calls to our attention what appears to have been an injustice done that paper in our article published in The New Republic on October 15, in which we emphasized the fact that The United States Daily published a greater proportion of pro-tariff news on July 10 and 11 than appeared in the median of a representative group of papers. The management of The Daily points out that it is not permitted, under its rules, to publish any statements from private sources; it is limited to material emanating officially from government sources. This means that The Daily is not properly comparable with papers which attempt to handle all the significant news. We have no evidence indicating that The Daily showed bias in its selection from the official materials at its disposal. We believe, therefore, that the imputation of bias against this paper, contained in our article, should be withdrawn.

HORNELL HART AND SUSAN M. KINGSBURY.

Washington, D. C.

Richard Hengist Horne

SIR: I am writing a biography of Richard Hengist Horne (1803-1884), an adventurer, journalist, critic, dramatist, poet. I shall be grateful to scholars and collectors who will communicate with me regarding any letters, original manuscripts (published or unpublished), or special information concerning Mr. Horne. Address correspondence to 120 Derby Hall, Ohio State University.

Columbus, Ohio. ERI J. SHUMAKER.

Speaking Out in Church

SIR: The writer of the paragraph on the Bishop Manning-Judge Lindsey incident, in your issue of December 17, deserves thanks, in the first place, for a welcome lightness of touch which does not always characterize editorial paragraphs and, in the second place, and this is more important, for seeing that Judge Lindsey rendered a great service precisely by challenging the Bishop right in his own cathedral. Most commentators have taken the position that somehow this was ungentlemanly, poor strategy, etc., etc. On the contrary, as you say, it would be most desirable if "the practice of standing up in church and challenging the minister would spread; we can think of nothing which would have a more salutory effect than for the clergy to be in constant dread of this."

Katonah, N. Y. A. J. MUSTE.

Dr. Flexner and Columbia

SIR: One of the courses in Home Study as it is conducted by Columbia University, which fell under Dr. Abraham Flexner's indictment in his "Universities" (reviewed in The New Republic of December 17), is a course in magazine-article writing. Now if Dr. Flexner himself had taken this course, it is possible that he might not have dealt quite so shabbily with his facts as he sometimes does in "Universities"; for throughout the course the responsibility of any writer who is dealing with factual material for getting the real facts and all the facts and then interpreting the facts correctly is constantly emphasized.

To be specific: On page 55 of "Universities," the impression is unmistakably conveyed that anybody can come up to Columbia Extension for all sorts of vocational courses and get a Bachelor's degree. As a matter of fact, most of these courses are Credit X (non-credit) courses. A few of them may be counted toward a secretarial certificate. None of them may be counted towards the B.S. in General Studies, which corresponds to the Bachelor's degree in the college proper. The B.S. in General Studies consists of a severe program in English languages, science, history, philosophy, etc., in all respects comparable to the usual prescribed college program: and only mature men and women who have satisfied the college-entrance requirements are admitted as candidates for the B.S. in General Studies in Extension. Minors must enter the college proper in either Columbia or Barnard. Now Dr. Flexner saves himself from entire inaccuracy—a stronger word might be used—by means of some asterisks and a small-type footnote at the bottom of the page to the effect that, to count certain courses, permission must be obtained from the director. To all intents and purposes, however, his statement is a flagrant misrepresentation. . . .

I myself belong to both of these scandalous departments, Extension and Home Study, which Dr. Flexner so excoriates. I know that a million things are to be done here, as elsewhere, for educational betterment. I know also that the students come with the keen edge of intellectual appetite and that the tone of the work is eager, joyous, alive. It is probable that Dr. Flexner will get his final answer on problems of adult education from the further developments of that "logic of events" which brought Extension and Home Study departments into being.

New York City. LORNA R. F. BIRTWELL.

The Responsibility of the Press

SIR: In company with the metropolitan dailies and most of the weekly magazines published in New York City, The New Republic has consistently opposed the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act. I am wondering whether the press is willing to accept the responsibility which rightly belongs to it for having attempted, from the very beginning, to cultivate disrespect for this particular legislation. It is interesting to speculate what the condition today might be if printers' ink had been employed on the side of law enforcement instead of on the side of law breaking.

Some periodicals have, of course, been more dignified than others. Nevertheless, even the most dignified of our metropolitan dailies have not hesitated to edit the news columns by introducing sly digs at prohibition, so as to create an atmosphere of comedy. As everybody knows, ridicule is a very effective form of argument, and yet to introduce ridicule into what purports to be an account of the news is, to use a current phrase, "hitting below the belt."

At the present time the press is calling persistently and often vociferously for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Are the editors convinced that the repeal of the Amendment will bring about the reforms of which the country stands in need? Certainly Sullivan, the author of "Chicago Surrenders," one of the most significant books on the crime situation that has been published, does not believe so. On the contrary, he declares that "after repeal comes the deluge." In any case the agencies that have been persistent in attempting to modify the law must take the responsibility for what happens afterward, if that modification is attained. Up to the present time very few, even of the more sober and thoughtful periodicals, have seemed to be aware that this demand would be made upon them.

It must be apparent to everybody that the time for levity and the expression of merely personal predilections has passed by. The question before the country is really the question whether men of intelligence and a sufficient degree of self-control to observe temperance are willing to deny themselves an entirely unnecessary indulgence for the good of others. The country sorely needs some agreement upon a social program in which there shall be coöperation and the exercise of a degree of unselfishness on the part of individuals for the good of the group as a whole.

Will the press advocate such an altruistic view or will it continue to attack the prohibition law with nothing to offer in the way of a constructive social program?

Columbia University, New York City. JAMES F. HOSIC.

[The New Republic did not oppose prohibition until, after several years of it, the editors became convinced that it was unworkable. Far more printers' ink in this country has been devoted to supporting it than to opposing it. If ridicule has been used against it, that is because it is popularly thought a fit subject for ridicule. We should be glad to share responsibility for what happens after repeal, and if Ontario and Sweden are precedents, the responsibility would not be heavy. Are the prohibitionists willing to accept responsibility for what is happening now? If by totally abstaining we could serve "the good of others," we should be quite ready to do so, but what conceivable relevance has this question under unenforceable prohibition laws?—THE EDITORS.]

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Voting the Humanist Ticket

Towards Standards, by Norman Foerster. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 224 pages. $2.50.

American Critical Essays, edited with an introduction by Norman Foerster. The World's Classics. New York: Oxford University Press. 520 pages. $.80.

THESE two books continue the New Humanist controversy. The first is a survey of the present critical movement in American letters, and although its many omissions are perhaps significant, the bias can be accounted for and understood. In the choice of essays for the second book, Mr. Foerster has unfortunately permitted journalism—the interest of the moment—and polemics to play a leading hand. While most of the classics of American criticism, like Poe's essay on the poetic principle and Henry James's "The Art of Fiction," are present, Lowell occupies a place altogether out of proportion to his merits, being the only writer represented by two essays. Though the essays themselves come down as late as 1922, and include a writer as young as Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, Mr. Foerster ignores Mr. H. L. Mencken, both in his introduction and in the work itself. This seems to me an omission which no difference of opinion can justify. There is likewise no mention of Mr. George Santayana, Mr. John Livingston Lowes or, among the older generation, Professor Francis Gummere, the author of "Democracy and Poetry"; there is no reference to Mr. James Branch Cabell's excellent essays in "Beyond Life," no hint of the existence of such able literary critics among the older generation as Mr. John Jay Chapman, Mr. Robert Morss Lovett or Mr. Albert Jay Nock, and no allusion to the work now being done by Mr. Edmund Wilson, Mr. Paul Rosenfeld, Mr. Gorham Munson or Mr. Waldo Frank. In short, Mr. Norman Foerster has presented in his introduction a picture of American criticism with at least half of its most distinguished names left out. This sort of emphasis can be explained only on the theory that the New Humanist controversy has become an obsession, and that writers who have not participated in it as either antagonists or allies automatically "do not count." Let no one fancy that I speak out of pique. In both books, Mr. Foerster has devoted a more than generous amount of space to my own work; but the welcome compliment does not atone for the bad judgment. The least that the Oxford University Press can do is to issue a second volume of essays to serve as a counterpoise.

In "Towards Standards" Mr. Foerster's preoccupation with schools and battles leads to similar exclusions; but thanks partly perhaps to the example of Mr. Frank Jewett Mather, the unhappy acrimony that originally characterized the New Humanist polemics has disappeared: even when Mr. Foerster's judgments are most political, his words remain courteous. The introductory essays deal with the historical meanings of the term "humanist": Mr. Foerster does not conceal the original literary bias of the term, but he conceives that the time has come to lay the foundations of a new humanistic scholarship. In his discussion of impressionism and of "prophecy," Mr. Foerster sometimes seems on the point of fulfilling his own demand, piercing beneath the label and examining the reality itself. Thus he acknowledges that impressionism is "not only seductive, but also, in certain respects, admirable and useful," in its emphasis upon esthetic responsiveness, upon vitality of expression, in stressing the element of uniqueness and the importance of personality; and if Mr. Foerster rejects it as a complete theory of criticism, he does no more than what Benedetto Croce does in his article on esthetics in the current Britannica. Mr. Foerster's discussion of journalistic criticism is equally discerning: indeed, throughout the book there is an evident conflict between an able scholar, eager to arrive at truth, and the party man who closes his eyes and votes a straight ticket. In these essays, he is like a certain distinguished university president during the last presidential election: he admits all the arguments on the opposing side, but when the time comes to cast his ballot, he remembers that he is a Republican.

Why is it then so difficult for Mr. Foerster to arrive at a full understanding of the issues and points of view he feels it his duty to oppose? In analyzing his comments upon my own work, I have discovered two sources of error. One is the unwillingness to accept a humanistic point of view unless it is founded upon the dogmas of dualism, the middle ground, the *frein vital*, and unless it commits itself to a relentless warfare upon romanticism, humanitarianism and naturalism. Failing in these essentials of orthodoxy, Mr. Foerster is bound to assume that one must fail in every other important issue. This is nicely shown when Mr. Foerster, after giving a very sympathetic condensation of "The Golden Day," goes on to discuss its weaknesses. One of these is that according to Mr. Foerster's interpretation of my philosophy, "creative thought turns out to be receptive thought, its mission being merely to gather 'all the living forces of its day and express them.'" What I actually said in the passage Mr. Foerster so curiously edited and interpreted is as follows:

> The mission of creative thought is to gather into it all the living sources of its day, all that is vital in the practical life, all that is intelligible in science, all that is relevant in the social heritage, and, recasting these things into new forms and symbols, to react upon the blind drift of convention and habit and routine.

Is Mr. Foerster dishonest? I am sure he is not; but his handling of this passage shows how humanistic orthodoxy may lead to a willful blindness which in its effects is almost as bad as outright dishonesty.

The second source of error which underlies the teaching of Messrs. Babbitt and More, as well as that of their disciples, is an inability to grasp a different philosophic system than that of "common-sense" dualism, in which nature is presented as the realm of determinism, and man as a purely voluntary agent whose moral essence puts him outside the realm of nature. Hence Mr. Foerster is bewildered by the fact that I regard man as both a passive and an active factor, both creature and creator: he tries to make it out that for me the formative agent is the environment, not the organism, simply because he cannot on his own terms conceive that both elements may be formative agents. This unwillingness to admit that a naturistic metaphysics may still lead to humanist conclusions is responsible, I fear, for the almost comical neglect of Mr. George Santayana, made all the more pointed by the fact that the bibliography in "Humanism and America" failed to mention "The Life of Reason," though it included his earlier "Interpretations of Philosophy and Religion."

In short, it is not a new humanism that the New Humanists are interested in: what they wish to establish is *the* New Humanism—that created and fostered by Messrs. Babbitt and More. I have given at some length, in another place, my reasons for feeling that this creed is insufficient, and in many points erroneous; and I am not unduly im-

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pressed by the fact that the New Humanists have a "program," whereas I have by contrast only a point of view. If the synthesis in thought and the synergy in action toward which we are working be worth anything, it cannot be put together overnight, nor can it be just a well meaning hash of today's rejections and yesterday's platitudes. The very satisfaction of the New Humanists with their program is a mark of shallowness, and a witness of their failure to see how much deeper and wider the foundations of a new synthesis must be, before we can even lay the first stone. LEWIS MUMFORD.

Flivv-o'-the-Wisp

Moving Forward, by Henry Ford, in collaboration with Samuel Crowther. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 310 pages. $2.50.

Edison as I Know Him, by Henry Ford, in collaboration with Samuel Crowther. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. 123 pages. $1.50.

THE FIRM of Ford and Crowther, Ltd., has again become active, producing in "Moving Forward" a third unit of the series which began with "My Life and Work" and continued with "Today and Tomorrow." Like its predecessors, the current work is composed about 75 percent of business philosophy and 25 percent of shop talk. "Edison as I Knew Him," written by the same authors, is a unique fabrication; it is biographical, as the title indicates, and works the Edison vein out so thoroughly that a considerable section at the end of the book has to be devoted to the Edison elements of the Ford museum village at Dearborn. In the present review, I intend to discuss both works as books of fantastic travel.

Now, books of travel seldom interest me, but fantasy does often, and some of my fondest literary affection is given to narratives like that voyage of Panurge, in which the two elements are combined. This is why I like, on occasion, to stow myself unobtrusively in the ramble seat of the Magic Flivver, and go lolliputting up the Valley of Nevertwasit to the good town of Wishington, in the Land of Nod, with that giant of industry Samuel Crowther and that happy-go-lucky antiquarian Henry Ford. And I am happy to find that my present trip in this amiable company includes a little journey to the home of Thomas A. Edison, here featured as "the greatest inventive genius in the world" and "the man who knew [in 1896] most about electricity in the world."

"It is the fashion," says Mr. Ford as the Magic Flivver rolls on, "to call this the age of industry. Rather, we should call it the age of Edison. For he is the founder of modern industry in this country." And this is so because Mr. Edison's inventions, as it seems to Mr. Ford, "have made modern industry possible." The impish fancy of this is particularly rib-tickling to me, for only two days ago the local Edison company changed our electrical supply from direct current, which is wasteful, inflexible and generally difficult to manage, to alternating current, the introduction of which made possible the manifold applications of electrical energy and the giant power developments of our time. And I happen to be quite certain that Dr. Nikola Tesla originated the equipment for generating and handling alternating current, while Mr. Edison declared flatly against it, favoring the installation of direct-current equipment such as the Edison company is replacing today, at considerable expense.

When Mr. Ford and Mr. Edison get together on the subject of economics, they tacitly agree to leave their terms undefined. The most delightful foolery results; and, as Mr. Edison says, "results alone count." "How do they expect to get anything without capital?" he asks. And says Mr. Ford, "It seemed to me a sensible remark. Capital is not everything, but still you cannot start anything without capital. . . . For without capital the plants could not be built and hence the benefits of the distribution of electricity . . . would be delayed and the people, while they might grow poorer, could not grow more prosperous." If only one of the characters from Ring Lardner's "I Gaspiri" had been there to remark that you cannot start even a sentence without some kind of capital, and that capital punishment is necessary to the concentration of electricity, it would have been perfect.

Mr. Edison is a mine of ludicrous and entertaining notions. He has often declared to Mr. Ford "that it was a great mistake ever to have even the postal service run by the government and that any first-class private corporation could give better service at lower rates and still turn a comfortable profit." To get the full humor of this sally, one must have bought electricity from the Edison company in Detroit and from the Hydropower Commission across the river in Ontario, and have compared the bills sent in by each. Mr. Ford emphasizes the pantaloonery of the business when he remarks that deficits in government-operated projects are made up out of the public treasury. At the close of the fiscal year 1928-9, the Commission lowered its rates, returned $10,000 to the city of Windsor, because of having profited too heavily on this municipal contract, and turned over a net profit of five millions to the provincial government. Meanwhile we (my family and I) cooked, cleaned, lighted and ironed electrically, at a cost of less than three dollars a month, with current generated at Niagara, 250 miles away. Furthermore, ale from government stock in Windsor cost us nineteen cents a quart, net, as compared with a dollar for the same amount from the privately owned community centers across the river.

Our side jaunt winds up with a visit to the Edison stronghold at Menlo Park, as recreated in Dearborn by Mr. Ford. The old Edison laboratories are as complete as restoration and research can make them. Even some of the soil and shrubbery has been transplanted to make the recreation bona fide in every particular. "We are able," says Mr. Ford, "to show everyone just how the first village ever to be lighted with incandescent light looked when the current was switched on. That teaches more than books will teach."

Back on the main road (in "Moving Forward") the fantastic character of the country unreels itself in an endless skein. Labor Saving Machinery appears in a fright wig, thrusting helpless workmen from the factory into the highroad. Mr. Ford caps it with a new adjective, and as Labor *Serving* Machinery it operates peacefully, performing tasks that no workman ever could have accomplished. What workman, for example, could squeeze the end of a one-inch bar into a two-inch disc? The proletarians on the highway decide it must have been a couple of other fellows. . . . It reminds me of Groucho Marx's oration at Cocoanut Grove: "Do you want to be wage slaves? No! What makes wage slaves? Wages! Down with wages! Hurrah for Liberty!" . . . That's it, you see? Not displaced, but set free for more urgent work—work that machinery can't do. . . . Do they want to be machines? No! Hurrah for Liberty! "The American working man," says Mr. Ford, "can turn his hand to anything."

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Production of ten thousand units daily and optional choice of body colors go hand in hand (page 162). Yet Ford preparations for twelve thousand units daily in early 1924 carried no hint of such a concession, and "Any color, as long as it is black" held sway until late in 1925, when optional color choice made its appearance after a shutdown, and continued in force regardless of the number of units produced. "We have never," says Mr. Ford, "in settling on our own designs or prices, given the slightest attention to what anyone else was doing in the same field." (Page 105.) And the accusing spirit of M. André Citroën, clasping a fuel tank built integrally like that of the Model A, murmurs sorrowfully: "What a flair, then, for coincidence!"

But I must not give the impression that "Moving Forward" is all fun and fantasy. There are spots where Mr. Ford devotes himself to sober, solid facts. For example, the chapter entitled "The Changing Scene" warrants the serious consideration of the reader. I know, because I wrote a considerable share of it myself. I note that involuntarily I have contributed a section on ship-metal salvage (page 236) and a section on the Johansson gauge-manufacturing room (page 215). Barring telepathic prose transference, these portions of the book were taken from articles written by myself three and four years ago, when I was employed by the Ford Company. Clippings from two of these articles are at my elbow. Two of the chapters in the book were taken from articles written by former associates of mine, so the volume to a considerable extent represents strikingly the production principle of assembly *en série*. . . . I imagine that this is one of the first second-hand ghost stories ever told.

MURRAY GODWIN.

Evolution

Parade of the Living, by John Hodgdon Bradley, Jr. New York: Coward-McCann. 308 pages. $3.

Sons of the Earth, by Kirtley F. Mather. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 272 pages. $3.50.

ALTHOUGH popular interest in evolution has greatly diminished ever since it came to be realized that evolution is no answer to the psalmist's question, "What is man?" the history of life on earth still remains an absorbing theme, both for the scientist and for the intelligent amateur. It is the common merit of these two books that they have catered primarily to the scientific interest in evolution and that the Victorian element of moralizing on human social problems has been reduced in them to a minimum.

Professor Bradley's book is by far the more entertaining. The author has the advantages of a gifted literary style and of a felicitous selection of material. What he has done in fact is to take the stream of life and interpret it as a dramatic pageant in human terms. The result is a book which certainly makes vivid the progressive and interrelated changes that life and its environment have undergone in the long history of the earth, without really misleading the reader. As the author himself says, in writing the history of the lower creatures he "has used the vocabulary of man simply because that of oysters is unknown to him." One might indeed object to the humanizing of evolution if a truly objective account of the nature of the evolutionary process were available, but as none is available—and perhaps none is possible—there is no harm in using the "as if" method of conscious striving and conscious adaptation.

"Sons of the Earth," by Professor Mather, deals primarily with the paleontological history of man, as revealed by the geological record, but it also contains introductory chapters dealing with the history of the earth and the evolution of life before man. The book is thus a survey of all history before human recorded history—that is to say, all history for which "mother earth's diary" provides the clue. It is perhaps for this reason that the book may be said to lack a completely integrated perspective; for while geology tells us both of the evolution of species and of the evolution of Cro-magnon art in the Dordogne caves, there is no doubt that the two sets of facts belong on different planes. Despite this drawback the individual chapters are quite interesting, and the book as a whole presents a valuable and authoritative summary of the various fields of investigation in which geology plays a role.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG.

Norwegian Village

Vagabonds, by Knut Hamsun. New York: Coward-McCann. $3.

WHEN THE winter night is over, and the earth thaws, and the Norway villagers get their herring nets ready, and begin to plow, there appear on the road vagabonds: organ grinders, peddlers, selling fat gold rings, selling watches, or bolts of stuff for Sunday dresses, or just buttons and needles and scissors and knives. There is little money in the houses they come to; they have to give credit, they have to be paid in kind. If they would only stay in one place, they might start a little shop, and build themselves a house, and get married. But they can't. They were themselves villagers once. Something happened: they went to a fair, or to the city with a herring haul; their blood changed, and they must be on the road. They may fall in love, try to force themselves to stay in one place. But the houses become too small. They sleep in the hay barn, then they must sleep in the open, and one day they're gone.

They're men and they're women. The women do not wander, but when a stranger comes, they become restless, mad. They forget their vows, they forget their own minds, and they sneak to the hay barn where the stranger sleeps. *Elles ont le diable au corps,* while for the men the devil whistles on the road, behind that tree, around that bend. What they are seeking, where they are going, these wretches do not know. But they hurry, because the northern sun will not warm them long. It will each day be nearer and nearer to the horizon, nights will be longer and soon it will be all dark and cold, and there will be wind, and the winter nights will stop their wandering.

"Vagabonds" is a typical Hamsun landscape; there is even the woman who kills, goes to prison and after a few years comes back to the village and finds everything unchanged. The children have grown up, but they are like their parents were, and these are dead and the children have offspring of their own. The villages are tuned to misery: there was a herring strike, and for a while the place was almost a little city. The storekeeper had expensive foreign foods brought in; the fishermen gorged on Dutch cheese, and swilled French brandy, and the girls bought crimson silks and golden rings. Then the money was gone, and the storekeeper went bankrupt and himself ate up what remained of the moldy cheese; so there remained stomachs that were stretched, and rings that proved gilt, and the foundation of a new village store that was never finished.

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A few of the villagers turned vagabonds; the rest tightened their belts and, the long winter night through, dreamed of another herring strike.

It is a depressing book. There is no escape. There is not even frustration, because there is no reaching for the moon. In America they often fail, and there is despair. But for a while there are dreams of accomplishment, of realization. They think New York, they think Paris, they think a million dollars. They do not think in Hamsun's Norway. They just exist amidst a smell of herring. Occasionally the mind opens, and they want to get away. They go on the road, and they come to another village, just like the one they left behind. So they wander, never able to relax again, to rest again. The ones they left behind are happier than they. Their minds never opened. They repair their nets, they sow their grain, they buy some needles from a wandering peddler, and when winter comes they warmly cover themselves and sleep.

NATHAN ASCH.

Tabloid Mass Psychology

The American Public Mind, by Peter Odegard. New York: Columbia University Press. 279 pages. $2.50.

HERE IS a field already deeply furrowed. In the United States such men as John Dewey, George Santayana, George A. Dorsey, Horace M. Kallen, Charles A. Beard and Walter Lippmann have plowed it thoroughly; in England, such men in recent years as Norman Angell and Bertrand Russell have examined mass psychology and have turned up rich loam. Professor Odegard, who teaches political science at Ohio State University, has read them painstakingly and has summarized some of their findings and others in popular fashion. Thus he is attentive to Clayton Hamilton, Eddie Bernays and Irwin Edman, but seems unfamiliar with Dr. Kallen's important contributions. His material looks indeed a little miscellaneous and spotty.

"Why do we behave like Americans?" Mr. Odegard inquires in his preface, and continues:

> Whence come our ideas and ideals? What are the forces which mold our minds? Is the family bankrupt, the Church decrepit? Who controls our schools, and what do they teach? What newspapers do we read, and how do they influence our behavior? Are the movies and the radio enervating or elevating? Do our political parties adequately represent our opinions on public questions? If not, why do they endure? What function, if any, do lobbyists perform? Are we helpless victims of high-pressure advertising and propaganda? Is there an American Public Mind, and where is it to be found? These are the questions which the following pages attempt in part to answer.

Mr. Odegard offers sketchy replies to the first four questions; the fifth, sixth and seventh appear to be merely rhetorical. Who in the world supposes that the movies are either enervating or elevating? As for the radio: when Dr. Albert Einstein and Sir Arthur Eddington enter into competition with Floyd Gibbons and Rudy Vallée, when grand opera competes with Ben Bernie's orchestra, there is a real question, but I find no answer to it. As for the major political parties, Mr. Odegard appears to make no acute distinction between public opinion and the public interest. Everybody knows what the function of the lobbyist is; and in a republican government, where issues are made by minorities, it is sometimes a useful function, although Mr. Odegard does not say so. We are not entirely helpless victims of high-pressure advertising, based on unconscious emotions and mass hungers, so long as organizations like Consumers' Research, Inc., are in action for our protection. As for the inquiry about the American Public Mind, Mr. Odegard goes on the assumption that it exists and functions pervasively, so that this question also is rhetorical.

Although Mr. Odegard devotes a deal of space to the motion picture, and quotes among others S. L. (Roxy) Rothafel, he neglects the more important of two books by William Marston Seabury, and he seems never to have heard of the only exhaustive and authoritative history of the movies, Terry Ramsaye's "Million and One Nights." If Mr. Odegard had informed himself more competently he would not, I take it, have swallowed, hook, line and sinker, the propaganda from the Will Hays office about the movie industry, such as that it is fourth in size, whereas it is not even among the first ninety-eight. He states that it employs "more people than Ford and General Motors combined," while even Mr. Hays has chastely reduced the number of employees (for propaganda purposes) from 350,000 to 225,000, and the Department of Commerce cannot find even twenty thousand. One has a right to ask that the man who volunteers as the analyst, guardian and surrogate of our public mind be himself a little tough-minded in dealing with the forces that play on mass psychology.

The book is lazily edited, for which Mr. Odegard perhaps is not to blame. I might fill this page with instances; one will suffice. "Mr. F. Remington, Cuban correspondent of The New York Journal," was in truth Frederic Remington, in his day a famous artist. And Mr. Odegard is responsible for the implication that the "good advertising man" has discovered "that people think as much with their viscera as with their brains"; the theory that men think with their whole bodies dates back at least as far as Aristotle. Evidently this book is not meant for classroom use but for popular consumption. Scholarship, Mr. Odegard says, "is tedious and time is fleeting, so the American characteristically seeks a short cut. . . . We want culture, but in concentrated form. Publishers do not hesitate to fill the demand." No, publishers do not; and Mr. Odegard's cultural dose is duly concentrated.

SILAS BENT.

Book Notes

BIOGRAPHY

THE MOTHER OF WASHINGTON, by Nancy Byrd Turner. *Hartford: E. V. Mitchell; New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 272 pages. $3.50.*

Mary Ball Washington's life was no different from the life of any other rosy-cheeked young girl in the Virginia of her time. She went to dances and frolics; she liked to flirt with the boys; she always enjoyed life, and giggled a great deal. At twenty-two she married a tall widower named Augustine Washington, and settled down to a monotonous life of child-bearing and housekeeping. She was neither beautiful nor intelligent. The only reason that we know anything about her is because she had a son who became famous in spite of her efforts to keep him away from war. As an old woman she was difficult and complaining. Once she made a mint julep for Lafayette. Why very mild and unimportant women who happened to have famous sons should have so many volumes written about them is a question which only a hero-worshiper can answer.

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TWICE BORN IN RUSSIA, by Natalia Petrova. *New York: William Morrow and Company. 194 pages. $2.*

The author of this book, by assuming an undistinguished name, has sought to reduce the story of her life during seven years of Soviet rule to the common denominator of any Russian woman's experience. A member of the class dispossessed by the revolution, who in the course of one lifetime passed through two distinct historical epochs, she met the often harrowing events of her new existence with a fine gallantry, an undaunted spirit which refused to admit the possibility of defeat. In retrospect, she views the revolution without despair or bitterness, and takes quiet pride in the fact that, despite her lack of preparation for anything but the frivolities of life, she succeeded in overcoming so many difficulties.

H. G. WELLS, by Geoffrey West. *New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 286 pages. $3.*

Here is a brisk, competent and externalized biography of a writer whose reputation has dwindled in the past ten years, though he must still be reckoned among the important English authors of this generation. "Mr. West" (the name is a pseudonym) tells no scandal, and offers little important information of any sort that is new to the admirers of the creator of Kipps and Mr. Polly.

Psychology and Education

THE ART OF INTERROGATION, by E. R. Hamilton. *With an introduction by C. Spearman. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 174 pages. $2.75.*

Those who have, in examining mental tests, wondered whether the test could test any other ability than the ability of the testee to pass the tests, will be interested in these "studies in the principles of mental tests and examinations." Mr. Hamilton brings some very astute questions to bear upon the questioners. "Nothing in the history of psychology is more remarkable than the success with which 'mental tests' . . . have been employed by some psychologists; nothing more lamentable than the triviality to which others have been led by the same methods. The far-reaching significance of the more judicious applications of mental tests, and the dangerous popularity of the more futile, alike call for a review of the assumptions that underlie their use." Accordingly, the author seeks to analyze the various ways by which ambiguity can creep into the test and vitiate its results. The nature of his inquiry brings it well within the scope of the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method, under the aegis of which it is published.

THE CHILD'S CONCEPTION OF PHYSICAL CAUSALITY, by Jean Piaget. *Translated by Marjorie Gabain. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 309 pages. $4.*

Primitives, abnormals and children seem to offer our nearest approach to the laboratory conditions necessary for any scientific investigation of the processes underlying thought. In the present volume Jean Piaget continues the study of child psychology, thereby contributing his fourth volume on this subject to the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method. To test the young child's conception of physical causality, he asks for explanations of very rudimentary phenomena, such as the floating of boats or the sinking of pebbles, and classifies the categories of thinking implicit in the answers. In this way he aims to discuss the problem of knowledge "within the bounds of psychology" and without encroaching "upon the domain of epistemology." The result of his experiments seems to justify him in his contention that our understanding of the world "lies half-way between empiricism and apriorism: intellectual evolution requires that both mind and environment should make their contribution. This combination has, during the primitive stages, the semblance of confusion, but as time goes on, the mind adapts itself to the world, and transforms it in such a way that the world can adapt itself to the mind."

Fiction

NOTHING TO PAY, by Caradoc Evans. *New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $2.50.*

Messrs. Mencken, Priestley and Walpole approve thoroughly of this book, which was obviously written by a man who has

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learned from experience that life on occasion may be both difficult and wormwood to the soul. Uncompromising honesty and compassion keep the novel from being just another sordid chronicle of unpleasant people; Mr. Evans refuses to give his young Welsh draper's clerk obsessed with a desire to save money a single redeeming human quality, yet he somehow manages to make Amos's everlasting scheming for success pitiable rather than repulsive. The deliberate use of biblical phraseology, here combined with generous doses of Welsh vernacular, gives the story a certain dignity—at the expense, at times, of clarity.

THE WATER GIPSIES, by A. P. Herbert. *New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.*

Mr. Herbert is a right winger and a dyed-in-the-wool reactionary, but he is such a good-humored and civilized one that it would be unmannerly to criticize him for his attitude on matters as insignificant as politics and art. As a matter of fact, this novel very nearly disarms criticism; by juggling deftly with both the romantic and the realistic methods, Mr. Herbert achieves something Mr. Arnold Bennett has never quite been able to do—take the drabness out of the lives of the millions and leave fidelity in. Jane Bell, housemaid, marries a Socialist subway guard who drowns almost directly, attempts to seduce a blue-blooded and handsome artist for whom she poses in the nude, and ultimately reconciles herself to the state of life into which it has pleased Mr. Herbert to call her—domesticity on a canal boat with a good but inarticulate bargeman. Certain incidents, notably the disastrous excursion of the Bell family to the Derby, have a Dickensian flavor about them, if they are not an improvement on Dickens. Possibly it is not literature with a great big L, but it is a very delightful and readable book.

THE WATERS UNDER THE EARTH, by Martha Ostenso. *New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.*

There is reason to suspect that some day Miss Ostenso will write a first-rate book; she will first, however, have to chuck overboard her preoccupation with arbitrary plot mechanics and allow her people to do what they want instead of what she or magazine editors believe fictional characters ought to do. With Miss Ostenso the plot is, preëminently, the thing; and the tribe of Welland children, who one by one go down to defeat in the struggle to lead their own lives, are hampered less by the bigotry and ignorance of their father than by the exigencies of a preconceived formula. Matt Welland, the father whose love wrecks all but Carlotta, the youngest, is the most memorable figure of the lot. He is a stupid and blundering but rather appealing figure, and it would have been so easy to have made him a villain.

A Correction

Through a typographical error on page 179 of The New Republic for December 31, 1930, the statement was made that Robert H. Lucas, executive director of the Republican National Committee, had spent $400,000 in the endeavor to defeat Senator Norris in the Nebraska election. The sum should, of course, have been $4,000.

Contributors

FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON is the author of a number of volumes on motion pictures. She lectures on this subject at Columbia University.

MARIE DE L. WELCH is a California poet who was formerly coeditor of The San Francisco Review.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS's next book will be a play, "Words on the Windowpane," which Macmillan is publishing this spring.

LEWIS MUMFORD is one of the editors of "The American Caravan" and the author of a biography of Herman Melville, "The Golden Day" and other books.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG is the author of "The Adventure of Science," which Simon and Schuster published recently.

NATHAN ASCH has published three novels: "Pay Day," "Love in Chartres" and "The Office."

SILAS BENT, the well known journalist, has recently completed a biography of Will Hays.

Present-day subjects of vital interest

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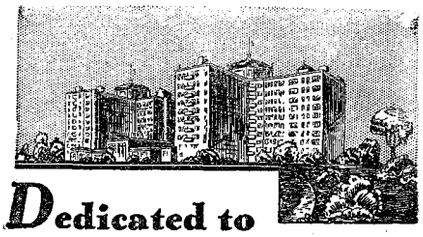

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